THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

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Editor—J. W. MARNE

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Published by THE ROLLS HOUSE PUBLISHING CO., LTD., Breams Buildings, E.C., for the Proprietor, J. W. De Costa.

"The Smart Set" Magazine, Dane's Inn House, 265 Strand, W.C. 2 to which all editorial and advertising matter should be addressed.

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About five years ago I wrote stating what an excellent friend my Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pen had proved. You will be interested to know the pen is still going strong. I have, to date, written about thirty novels with it, and it is as good as ever—better, I think. I would not part with it for anything. No writer could wish for a more faithful friend.

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NAT GOULD.

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Removes all Lines, Fills out Hollows, Gives and Retains for you a Good, Clear, Healthy and Natural Complexion.

Nearer to the Natural Oil of the Skin than any yet invented.
Reaches the Muscles and Tissues, and is a Youth Restorer.

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OUT OF THE MOUTHS, etc.

BY

H. DENNIS BRADLEY

"THE PARIS CONFERENCE"

"The colour of men's dress is enough to make a tired man pass away."

"At an opera men look like as many crows that have been shot—the smoke of gunpowder coming out of their mouths."

"As to the colour of men's dress, it is enough to give one a——"

"And it is in this busy age that it is especially necessary to wear bright clothes so as to keep going."—The Masters TOMMY and ADRIAN BEECHAM (children of Lady BEECHAM) in the *"Daily Mirror."*

OUT of the mouths, etc. . . .

It was Ruskin who demanded the child's vision in the artist and insisted that only the child saw colour untrammelled by convention.

Only the grown-up fools wander about the world bleating that grass is green; the wise child knows that it may be any shade, from golden in sunshine to grey in rain.

And with an artistic simplicity I admit to being a child-minded revolutionary in the matter of men's dress—amongst other things.

Before the war there were signs of a revolt against the extremely ugly conventions of colour and cut of our purblind ancestors.

* * * * *

The main thing to remember in connection with these questions of individuality and colour is that mere eccentricity in dress means nothing, except perhaps a lack of humour or self-knowledge on the part of the wearer. The difference between a wilfully eccentric suit and one that, although a departure from a long accepted and ridiculous convention, is pleasing to the eye and has a certain artistry about it, is the difference between good and bad taste, between vulgarity and refinement. No one has the right, in these days of electric unrest, to startle his fellow-man or impair the eyesight of the few remaining and enfeebled horses for the sake of striking a conspicuous note in the street-scape.

The merely bizarre, the frankly *outré*, with no *raison d'être* in beauty, convenience, or comfort, can never be expected to commend themselves to the huge majority of men, who, though tired of the wearisome sameness of the old convention of black and grey, and more tired still of the deadly monotone of khaki, have no desire to make spectacles of themselves.

* * * * *

After all, our clothes play an important part in our daily lives; we must wear something all the time we are out of our baths, and optimistically desire to look better out of it than in it, and that something, which we are compelled by the climate and the police to wear, has a far greater influence on our outlook and our nature than most people imagine.

Could one conjure a Monte Cristo dream in pea-green pyjamas, or visualise a Romeo in a standard suit?

* * * * *

Before the war this House produced its own designs in colour-blended materials. It will now do so again, as soon as they can be manufactured. It discards all Victorian conventions, and does not follow but leads fashion.

Frankly, I do not think the style of Pope and Bradley at all suitable to either the figures or the minds of old men, so they had better go elsewhere.

The following minimum prices are not iniquitous. Tweed Lounge Suits from £9 9s. 0d.; Dinner Suits from £12 12s.; Overcoats from £10 10s.

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Attractive Millinery

For Early Spring Wear

Adapted from the latest Paris models and made in our own workrooms by highly-skilled milliners.

Attractive Hat (as sketch) in black satin with tulle edge, trimmed at back with glycerined feathers.

Price 4½ Guineas

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First Delivery since the Armistice

OF THE

ROYAL WORCESTER

KIDFITTING CORSETS

897. Broché Corset, low bust, elastic gores, new patent "Non-pinching" Clasp, three sets hose supports.
Sizes 21 to 30 in. **29/6**

AT LAST we are able to supply the leading Drapers of prestige throughout the country with an advanced parcel of the incomparable Royal Worcester Kidfitting Corsets.

But as no agent has been able to secure more than a small percentage of his immediate requirements, you are urged to enquire at once of your local draper and make sure of one pair of these Corsets. Otherwise if you delay you may find them all sold, and it will be some time before the balance of our agents' orders can be filled.

This is the first delivery since the Armistice of Royal Worcester Kidfitting Corsets. All the new shapes for early Spring, 1919, are included, as well as the old favourite models brought up to date with the touch of 1919 fashion.

All the 1919 Models have the new patent *unpinchable clasp*, not found in any other make of corset.

If you have any difficulty in obtaining the Corsets write us and we will tell you where you can be supplied. Don't make shift with any mere copy of Royal Worcester Kidfitting Corsets when you can get the original. Don't delay inquiring for Royal Worcester Kidfitting Corsets, otherwise you are sure to be disappointed.

We ask you please to buy only one pair at a time during the present shortage so that as many ladies as possible may share in this first advance delivery.

If any difficulty write for name and address of nearest Agent who can supply—

ROYAL WORCESTER WAREHOUSE COMPANY

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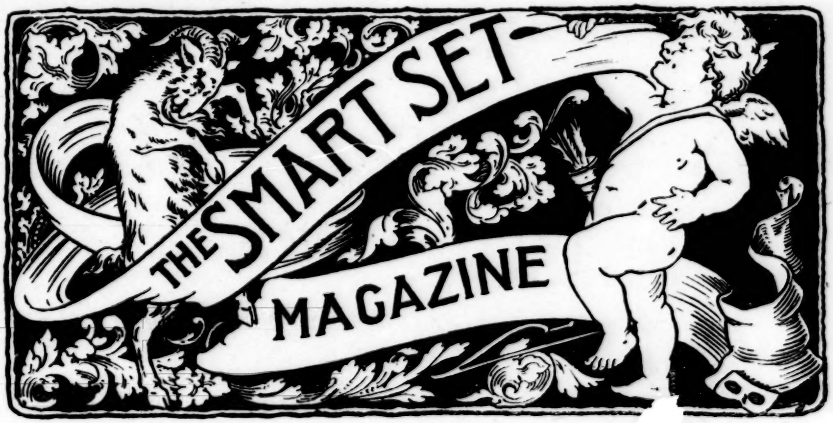
Vol. LVII APRIL, 1919 No. 4



THE WINCHESTER WOMAN

By Charles Stokes Wayne

CHAPTER I

IT was such a brief letter—not much more indeed than the barest note—that Brinton felt himself at a distinct disadvantage in his endeavour to estimate the writer by her handwriting. For the better part of an hour he had been sitting with the little square sheet and accompanying envelope spread out on his desk before him, comparing and reconsidering, one after another, the more or less revealing signs and symbols of taste, temperament and character, as they were there so charily set down.

The room, half library and half study, was a large one, occupying the south-west quarter of the ground floor. But in spite of its size it possessed an atmosphere of snug cosiness, imparted in a measure by the low ceiling, and emphasized in no small degree by the warm mahogany of the colonial furniture, including the ranging bookcases; the low-backed sofa, with its curving ends and quiet green upholstery; the deep easy-chairs of similar covering; the book-crowded tables; and the somewhat severe mantel, its severity softened by the low, long mirror above it, framed in dingy gilt, and reflecting the flower-filled bowl and vases spaced along its shining shelf.

Brinton's desk stood at a right angle to one of the south-facing windows, the morning sunlight slanting diagonally across its nearest corner. And the soft lilac-laden air, entering beneath the lifted sash, gently fanned his cheek as he bent his head in engrossed study of his problem.

His hair, a bit rumpled by his own intruding fingers, was iron grey. His shoulders drooped a trifle. These were, however, the only indications, either in face or figure, of advancing age. In another month he would be forty-three. Yet his skin was as soft and clear as a lad's; his colour as ruddy; his steel-grey eyes as bright.

The so-called science of graphology had long been something more than a mere diversion with Brinton. He had come of late years to regard it, if not as infallibly accurate, certainly in the light of his experience, as wonderfully, often indeed as amazingly, expository.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

By means of it he had been able to read men as open books; reserved, reticent men; dissemblers of good as well as of evil. The endowment of a Cincinnatus, ploughing in the field, and the dissimulation of a Cagliostro, no matter how plausible his speech, were clear as a limpid brook to Brinton, once their penmanship—a fairly generous specimen of it—was beneath his practised eye.

The scanty specimen over which he was now pondering was the sole response to a long-considered and carefully worded advertisement which, after much misgiving and no little demur, he had finally permitted his sister-in-law, who kept house for him, to insert in a New York Sunday newspaper.

What with a recent serious depletion of income—the royalties from his school histories had fallen off disastrously—and an alarming advance in the cost of living, this hitherto easy-circumstanced littérateur had been called upon to face not merely a disturbing accumulation of unpaid bills, but the realization that unless some immediate step were taken to add to his resources, embarrassment must speedily ensue.

There were three good-sized spare rooms in this quaint old house of his on the edge of his chosen and equally quaint old village in the hills; and it had been his sister-in-law's suggestion that these might be utilized to advantage for the accommodation of summer boarders.

Brinton, as has been said, raised at first a host of objections. He resented with vigour the proposed injection of strangers into the cherished privacy of his little family circle. He fretted for days over the humiliation of such an adjustment, in that it was destined to burden his sister-in-law with so great a share of the involved labour.

In the end he had yielded on one condition. The plan was to be regarded as merely a temporary makeshift, and to be concluded directly it became oppressive either to Alma or himself.

The advertisement was forwarded at once, and three days later, after inspecting each mail delivery with anxious anticipation, this one modest little enquiry had been received.

Alma Fielder was disposed to answer it at once.

"We'll give her the big south-west room," she decided instantly. "The one with the rose-trellis wallpaper and the white enamel furniture. And we'll ask her fifteen dollars a week."

Brinton, however, urged less precipitancy. He pointed out that the writer had said nothing whatever about references. "And we were so very careful to state that references were absolutely essential."

"I'll ask her for references when I write," suggested his deceased wife's sister.

But he was not to be won over.

"Wait," he said. "Twenty-four hours will do no harm. Let me study her fist a bit first."

And now he was studying it. The fruit, thus far, insomuch as the limited material permitted a yield, while in some respects eminently assuring, held, nevertheless, a seed of mystery, over which Brinton bent long in profitless speculation.

The writer, he had learned, first of all, was a tactful person. She was of thoughtful and rather serious mentality. She was reserved, as the compression of her small letters plainly showed. Yet, to judge by the sharply pointed character of these, she was of keenly acute perception. He had read, too, that she was affectionate, of broad mind and fine sense of justice; modest, refined, cultured.

Out of the profundity of his experience he had gathered, as well, certain side indications of personality. She was not in robust health. She was given to periods of nervous depression. She had, in all probability, recently gone through either a severe illness or a trying mental strain.

The cross strokes in the letter were, unfortunately, few; but the few there were, not only diminished in heaviness toward their finish, but were drawn out, seemingly to fill spaces at the end of

lines, indicating both transient emotions and mistrust. In his analysis, however, Brinton generously attributed this to the strain and stress of her late ordeal.

"*I am desirous of obtaining board for the summer in a quiet, isolated neighbourhood, and prefer a small private family to a large boarding house or hotel.*"

This was one of the three paragraphs of the letter. And in the midst of it lay for the graphologist that one perplexing and apparently baffling mystery. The word "isolated" was not only so strangely different from the rest of the writing as to suggest, at first glance, another hand, but it contained a signification that was distinctly disturbing. In all the other words the *a*'s and *o*'s were fairly open at the top; indicating a degree of frankness. But the *a* and *o* here were, in addition to being closed tightly, each tied, so to speak, with a distinct loop. And, according to the best authorities, this meant secretiveness carried to an extreme.

Viewed charitably, it meant that the writer would have little hesitancy in resorting to falsehood, if by so doing a desired end was to be gained. Had this looping of such letters been persistent and coupled with certain symbols of lack of conscience, Brinton would have at once pronounced the correspondent an unconscionable liar, and so have decreed her utter undesirability. But the one blot on an otherwise fair record, while it disturbed and puzzled him, was not permitted to weigh heavily in her disfavour. On the contrary, indeed, it provoked in him an itching curiosity to meet and study her.

Uncertain though he was he nevertheless had a theory. And to confirm it he became, just as soon as his conscience would permit, quite as eager as had been his sister-in-law to secure this occupant for the room specified.

He might have gone to Alma at once with his decision. His impulse was to hasten. But he had asked for twenty-four hours, and it was hardly commensurate with his dignity to suggest so much and be satisfied with so little. He put the letter and envelope to one side and took up the proofs of his new edition of "The History of England."

But between the typed impressions and his perfunctory gaze a vision persistently obtruded; a vision of a slight, pale woman in a black frock, with appealing eyes and inscrutable lips. So distinctly he saw it at times that it was like an apparition. He strove in vain to exorcise it. He rose from his desk and paced the floor, but at each turning it confronted him, until at length he could no longer resist its pleading.

The tall clock in a corner of the entrance hall was striking twelve as, directed by the maid, Emily, he mounted the stairs to his sister-in-law's room, to find her seated at her old-fashioned secretary, busy with the household accounts. She was older than Brinton's deceased wife by nearly three years, making her now thirty-six. A fair, plump, middle-sized spinster, domestic by training rather than by taste, with a face too broad for beauty, yet not without charm: the charm of robust health.

At the sound of his step she turned halfway about in her chair, resting one elbow on the blotting-pad, strewn with the bills she had been checking, and smiled. She was fond of David. To her sister he had been the very best of husbands. To herself he had been always most unselfishly kind and considerate. If the day should ever come—and she was not without hope that it might—when he would ask her to fill that sister's place in whole, as she had striven to do in part, she would not deny him.

She saw that the letter was in his hand and his look told her, even before he spoke, that his decision was favourable.

"It's—it's all right?" she queried.

"It's all right. Very right. It didn't take me long, did it? I suppose she's anxious for a prompt reply. Perhaps you had better write her at once, Alma."

"What did you find?"

"There was so little of it that complications were almost impossible. Yet

what's there is clear enough. I have no hesitation in saying that Mrs. Wharton is doubtless a very worthy and charming woman. From what I gather it seems to me that we might have been asked to take a much less congenial person into our home."

And he went on to tell her in brief summary of all the better things, omitting his one doubt, and making no reference to his theory nor to his curiosity.

"I do hope she's all you say she is," Alma returned, her own interest piqued as to how they would be borne out. "But you don't often make mistakes, do you, David?"

"Oh, I'm not infallible," he granted. "Sometimes—but I feel pretty sure about this."

CHAPTER II

THE second letter—that in which, to quote the signature, "(Mrs.) Anne Wharton" laconically announced the day and hour of her intended setting out for Northborough and the Brinton residence—held little of significance for the interested graphologist, save a meagre confirmation of those better things in the first which he had conveyed to Alma. To his relief, yet at the same time to his augmented interest, there was no repetition of the closed and tied *a* and *o*.

His sister-in-law's curiosity during the intervening days, deprived of the secret which stimulated his, partook rather of a reflective nature. She wondered still just how nearly David had hit the mark; but she wondered, too, whether their prospective guest was about her own age or older; or, perhaps, young enough to be a better companion for Julia, her sixteen-year-old niece, who was returning from boarding school the following week, than for herself. Nor were her reflections entirely free from a certain undercurrent of misgiving. She had assumed, naturally enough, seeing that there had been no mention of a Mr. Wharton, that the applicant was a widow. Suppose she should be young and lovely!

Alma had never regarded her brother-in-law as especially susceptible, but there was never "any telling" about men, and particularly about widowers. She almost wished that the decision had been adverse. Eventually, however, she consoled herself by arguing that a young and pretty widow, amorously, or even flirtatiously, inclined, would hardly choose to pass the summer in the bosom of a private family in an isolated locality. Women of that sort would naturally prefer a big hotel at one of the popular resorts. Even she, herself, unworldly, domestic creature that she was, would have spent her winters in a New York apartment and her summers at a Block Island caravansary, had circumstances not flung her into Northborough and the Brinton household to perform her vicarious service.

To David Brinton, on the other hand, there had been nothing surprising in the fact that the woman he pictured—and she was as young and lovely as Alma could possibly have dreaded—should crave quiet and isolation. Studiously minded himself, finding more joys in books than in people, delighting more in Nature and her varying moods than in the fixed artificiality of cities, he could very well understand the longing of souls like his own for precisely what Northborough and this old, grey, moss-traceried home had to offer.

As events turned out it was David upon whom, at the last moment, devolved the office of going down to the little branch-line station to meet the coming guest. Alma, who for days had been looking forward with ill-suppressed eagerness to the performance of this coveted task, discovered to her dismay that it would be impossible to complete the last of her multifarious preparations before train-time, and was forced reluctantly to yield the privilege to her mildly indifferent brother-in-law.

The unusual, if not important, nature of his mission was mirrored in the spick and span neatness of his toilet. His iron grey hair was more carefully brushed and parted than was customary.

Given to wearing soft collars as a rule, or riding-stocks, he wore to-day a stiff, freshly laundered, standing linen collar and knitted silken scarf with red and black bars. And his straw hat, with its slightly rolled brim, and his pepper-and-salt tweed suit were those he reserved, as a rule, for his infrequent visits to the city. Tall and spare, he presented, in spite of that slight student's stoop, a rather impressively dignified figure as, with hands clasped behind him, he slowly paced the grimy, worn planking of the small station platform. Yet his heart beat with an unwonted rapidity, and his pulses throbbed in nervous anticipation.

With the hoarse echo of the engine's whistle he came to a sudden halt, and stood where it had found him until the ancient locomotive had wheezed slowly to a stop and the few passengers had leisurely alighted.

Not only was he able to pick her out instantly from a choice of three women, all strangers, but at first sight of her, answering to his preconception as she did, his nervousness—his trepidancy—quite left him, and, lifting his hat, he smiled his recognition.

"I hope your journey hasn't tired you, Mrs. Wharton," he said as he joined her.

"Not in the least," she returned. "Do I look tired to you? It's because I've been ill. I feel more rested at this minute than for weeks. These hills, I know, will do wonders for me."

It impressed him strongly, this fact of his having pictured her so accurately. She was slight, almost to frailty, and so appeared taller than her inches. And she wore mourning, which accentuated a seemingly transparent pallor. Her age, Brinton judged, must be in the neighbourhood of twenty-five or -six. He could see that when younger and probably more robust she must have been very beautiful. Her eyes, deeply blue and liquid, were still lovely. But the prevailing reflection of her face now was one of pathos. It appealed strongly for her to Brinton's sympathies. And it was this, in all likelihood, which so set him at once at his ease.

That which a little later kindled in the host a still warmer inclination towards his guest was the quiet enthusiasm with which she greeted, as the dilapidated hired hack climbed the bough-arched village highway, one after another of the quaint landmarks of this Revolutionary hill settlement. The brick church, with its snowy wooden spire; the stone schoolhouse, with its tiny square, small-paned windows and pierced-board shutters; the broad clapboarded homestead of the Colonial governor, where Washington had been entertained; dear, all of them, to Brinton, not merely because of historical associations, but by reason, as he would often say, "of a certain intrinsic poetry—the poetry of age."

He spoke of this to her now, adding by way of explanation:

"Poetry, you know, Mrs. Wharton, in its widest sense, has been defined by someone, and very cleverly, too, I think, as 'anything that pleasingly addresses the imagination.'"

For the appositeness—the illumination, indeed—of her reply, he was scarcely prepared. He had addressed her almost as he would a child: his own daughter, for instance. And she had responded as his intellectual equal.

"I wonder," she asked, with an odd little plaintive gulp in her utterance, which had, too, a faint suggestion of the South, "whether you remember what Father André said about poetry. He called it 'the sister of sorrow.' 'Every man,' he maintained, 'that suffers and weeps is a poet; every tear is a verse; and every heart is a poem.'"

Their conversation, as the old white horse laboured up the long, tortuous hill street of the somnolent village, with its scattered residences, took its tone almost altogether from this key. And Brinton noted, not only that the boarder was true to type as foreseen, in that she was of thoughtful, serious vein, and acutely perceptive; but that she was reserved to reticence. Save for that initial volunteering of a recent illness, she

made no reference to herself whatever.

Nor, on her arrival at the house, did Alma find her any more communicative. The impression she made, notwithstanding, was scarcely less favourable than that made upon David. For no single note of the somewhat elaborate and painstaking preparations for her boarder's comfort and pleasure, over which Alma had laboured so diligently for the past week, was lost upon the observant and appreciative Anne Wharton. And especially did it rejoice the hostess to witness her demonstrative enjoyment of the freshly-cut roses—for it was mid-June—with which her room was gloriously and fragrantly decorated.

And this pleasing primal estimate did not fade with the roses. Each day brought additional evidences of her happy faculty of "fitting in"; of her abounding graciousness; of her never-failing delight in the country and all the homely comforts of the Brinton home. There was, however, just one ingredient of her boarder's disposition which Miss Fielder would have preferred eliminated. And it was the same one that Brinton had so interestingly noted. Though far from taciturn, Mrs. Wharton spoke rarely, if ever, of her past, and thus far had not once alluded to either acquaintances or friends.

It was not yet the end of the first week of her stay when Alma mentioned her discovery to David. There was something surreptitious in her approach and confidential in her manner, as she stole to him in his study three minutes after Mrs. Wharton had been seen to leave the house and disappear in the direction of the village.

David, catching the faint sound of her step behind him, turned from his desk, a question in his look. But she drew up a chair to intimate adjacence before speaking.

"If it weren't that Julia is returning in a few days," she began quietly, "I'd never say a word. But I've hardly slept the last two nights for thinking of it, and I feel, David, that you should know. There certainly is something queer about that Mrs. Wharton."

Brinton's grey-blue eyes were suddenly serious.

"You—you mean you've discovered—?"

"Yes and no. Now let me tell you. I—I just love her. She's as sweet and appreciative and considerate as any woman could possibly be. And it's perfectly remarkable how well you read her from her handwriting. But all the same I'm sure that she isn't the sort for Julia to live under the same roof with. Because there's a mystery about her."

"A mystery!" Brinton echoed, his interest quickened.

"A mystery," Miss Fielder rejoined. "Since entering our door she's never once mentioned anyone that she knows. Now, has she? You know how small the world is, and it just stands to reason that she's afraid we might know someone she knows and so learn something about her that she doesn't want known."

There at once recurred to Brinton a vivid vision of that "isolated" of the first letter, with its too secretive *o* and *a*. In the fullness of his admiration for Mrs. Wharton he had almost forgotten it. But if he still favoured the theory of a mystery, his reply to his sister-in-law dissembled it.

"It seems to me, Alma," he said, half smiling, "that you're taking a rather harsh view of the matter aren't you? There are many persons, you know, who dislike to have others—practical strangers, especially, as we are in this case—learn of their affairs, no matter how innocent they may be."

But the explanation was not adequate to satisfy Alma. It might apply in a measure. It might account for her peculiar reticence. There was something else, however.

"She's been here nearly a week," she went on, "and not a single letter has come for her—not in our care, I mean."

"Is that any reason to call her queer?"

"It wouldn't be, if it wasn't that she gets mail just the same."

"Gets mail just the same?" David repeated questioningly.

"Didn't you see her go out just now? There isn't a morning that she's missed going to the post-office. Day before yesterday Jane Homer saw her ask at the delivery window and saw Mr. Higgins hand her out three letters. It's pretty plain to me that she's got something to hide, or she wouldn't be so careful about our not getting sight of so much as the postmarks on her correspondence."

"I'm sorry I can't agree with you, Alma," Brinton returned. "I'm pretty sure Mrs. Wharton has a good and perfectly innocent reason for preferring to get her mail in that way. She tells me that her physician wishes her to walk each day, and that she dislikes walking except with an object. That would explain the matter, wouldn't it?"

Alma evidenced annoyance. Her brow knitted and she fidgeted nervously in her chair.

"It might, and it might not," she answered. "We never did get any references from her, you know. And I think that was a great mistake. Couldn't you get around it somehow to ask her for at least one?"

Brinton smiled a little quizzically. "I suppose I could," he said. "But I don't think I shall."

"Not even for Julia's sake?"

"No. Not even for Julia's sake. I don't think it necessary."

CHAPTER III

AGAINST the quiet pearl background of the Brinton home Julia blazed bright as Arcturus in the cold north sky. To Anne Wharton she was a complete and pleasing surprise. From the photograph, proudly shown to her by her host—a photograph taken of his daughter four years previously, a child of twelve—she had been led to expect a rather negative, mouselike little thing; neither pretty nor plain; without temperament, and almost without personality. And she had come down to supper on the evening of Julia's homecoming to discover a young woman of striking, if a little bizarre, beauty, and distinctly attractive individuality. A young woman with a glory of hair the colour of burnished copper, a skin of rose-leaf texture and fair as unmarred lilies, lips of vividly contrasting scarlet, and eyes as green as the salt sea.

She was quite as tall as Anne, and firmly moulded, with sweeping, curving lines which defied the pale blue muslin frock she wore to mask them.

There had been no introduction. Julia hadn't waited for it. Almost before their guest was across the threshold and in the room, she had cried out:

"Oh, there you are! I've been dying to see you. I wanted to go to your room, but Aunt Alma wouldn't hear of it. Daddy's written me such lovely things about you, Mrs. Wharton."

And impulsively then there had followed an embrace, and the girl's lips were pressed warmly against the boarder's cool cheek.

It was not until supper was over, though, and Julia had linked arms with her and taken her to see the view from "Lookout," that Anne Wharton came to a real appreciation of the open frankness of David Brinton's daughter, and gained thereby that clear insight to her strange admixture of ingenuous innocence with romantic fervour which was so strongly to attract her.

From the crest of Lookout Hill, twenty miles away to the eastward across the valley, against the dark green slope of Eagle Mountain, was visible an irregular patch of paler colour. It was so small and so uncertainly outlined that one might have gazed at the view for hours and not detected it.

"Ten to one you never noticed it before, did you?" asked the girl after she had pointed it out. "And—how many times have you been up here since you came?"

"Not often," Anne answered. "Not over three, as I remember."

"You can't see it in the morning, ever. And never when it's cloudy. But

on clear days this is the best time, with the sun full upon it. Look! Look now! Don't you see something glisten? It's like a spark."

Anne, shielding her eyes with a hand across her brow, gazed afresh. "Yes," she said suddenly. "Oh, yes! What is it?"

"It's the lake. Or one end of it, rather."

"And there's a hotel there?" Anne asked.

"You'd hardly call it a hotel. It's just a big house on a rise above the lake, where they take men who come up to fish. The lake is famous for its golden trout, you know."

"It has a name, I suppose."

"Of course. Parmalee's."

Anne wished that she might have been more enthusiastic about it, since Julia had been so eager to bring her here and to point it out. But it seemed to her such a trivial thing to make so much of. There was no question as to the impressiveness of the view in general. She had been told of that within an hour or so after her arrival, and had climbed here the very next morning to feast upon it. She had told Julia that. But the girl had enthusiastically promised her a surprise worth while. And the surprise was only this—Parmalee's.

Now, Julia was begging her to sit down with her on one of the great boulders and watch the clearing darken and merge, until quite indistinguishable, into the deeper life of the mountainside.

"As the sun sinks behind us you'll see the shadow creep higher and higher up Eagle. It's worth while, Mrs. Wharton. Really it is. It makes you feel—oh, I don't know how to tell you! Not sad, exactly, but—but so at peace. Just the same sort of peace one gets from reading Gray's 'Elegy.'"

What a strange combination the girl was! Or, could it be that intuitively she had read the boarder's secret unrest? That it was for this assuaging influence she had brought her up here, and not for the mere pointing out of the revealed clearing? The thought troubled her. Understanding was what she wished most to avoid.

"Surely, at your age, dear," she replied, "you shouldn't crave the melancholy."

"I shouldn't call it that. Though I suppose the Elegy is that, too. I mean tranquillity, rather. Mental calm, you know. A kind of sweet serenity. It's very grateful sometimes. Don't you think so? Oh, do, please, sit down there. And while we watch I'll tell you something, if you care to hear."

Anne did as she was bidden, and her young friend of an hour shared the smooth stone with her, sitting quite close, and circling her waist with an arm.

"May I tell you? It's about something that happened to-day, coming up on the train."

"Of course you may, dear."

"And you'll understand. I know you will. I couldn't tell Daddy, or Aunt Alma. They wouldn't."

"Are you sure? I'm certain your father would. Somehow I feel that I could tell him anything, and be sure that of all persons he would be just the one who would understand."

"But you're not his daughter," Julia qualified. "That makes all the difference. I don't mean that he'd punish me or be really angry. But I'm afraid he wouldn't— Oh, I know he wouldn't approve. And it might, you know, hurt him so, just because he couldn't."

"And you think that I will?"

"I don't think you'll disapprove. Because you're broader. You know the world better. You've—" But there she paused.

"I've what, dear?"

"It isn't so long since you were a girl of sixteen yourself."

Anne smiled. "You don't think so? To me it seems centuries. However, my dear, whether I approve or disapprove won't make so very much difference, will it? That's the answer. But your father's or your aunt's disapproval would make you unhappy."

Julia protested that she'd care very much how Mrs. Wharton viewed the

matter, admitting, after some further debate, that she was not herself quite sure she was in the right.

"But he was so good-looking, and so kind, that I couldn't be rude to him," she defended.

There was not very much of novelty in the experience. Julia, it seemed, had had a seat in the day coach to herself until just before the train pulled out. Then a young man, coming through, had halted in the aisle beside her, and politely lifting his hat, had enquired if he might share it. Naturally, she had consented. She couldn't possibly do otherwise. The morning being warm and her window closed, he had next volunteered to raise it for her. A little later he had offered her one of several magazines with which he was provided, and she saw no reason to refuse it. As she was glancing through it he ventured to recommend one of the stories. He happened to know, he said, the young woman who wrote it. It was an odd coincidence, he added, but she—Julia—bore a striking resemblance to the author. Certainly enough for them to have been sisters; nearly enough for them to be twins. Julia's hair, though, was a more beautiful shade, and he could tell by her eyes that she was better tempered. The writer was rather a vixen, he said.

"And because you didn't wish him to change his opinion, you from that moment strove to show him how agreeable you could be," Anne divined. "It was very clever of him."

"I didn't want him to think me a vixen, too," Julia naïvely admitted.

"Of course you didn't. Which was why, when he invited you to lunch with him in the dining-car, you first pretended not to be hungry and then yielded after a little persuasion."

The girl gazed at her with eyes of astonishment.

"How could you possibly know that?" she asked.

"I know the type and its methods," was the answer. "Shall I tell you some more?"

"Can you?"

"I fancy so. Since you had no appetite your new friend suggested a cocktail. Just an innocent little Bronx, with nothing in it that could possibly hurt you. Didn't he?"

This time Julia's scarlet lips parted in speechless wonder. Was it possible that her adventure was not unique after all, but merely one of many so nearly identical that each little incident of it could be so accurately described by an absent third party?

"Of course he did," Anne Wharton went on, not a little amused. "And, equally of course, you declined. The word cocktail frightened you. But he ordered it just the same, and made you take just a little sip of it to prove it was as harmless as he had promised. And before the luncheon was over you'd drunk half of it. Or was it all?"

"Oh, not a third," Julia protested hurriedly.

"But the third was enough to loose your tongue, wasn't it? And in a little while you felt as if you had known this nice young gentleman, not for hours, but for years. And he grew handsomer with each passing moment, and you fondly imagined that you'd never forget him or this day. This wonderful day, when Romance had come into your life for the first time. Now, tell me, my dear, the rest of it."

"But you've told it all," Julia declared, a little regretfully.

"Oh, no, I haven't. There's more, I'm sure. Did he come to Northborough with you? Are you to see him again soon? Or did he give you an address to write to?"

"He went on," was the answer. "I changed at the Junction, you know."

"He has your address, I suppose. And he'll be coming back this way very soon."

Julia nodded.

"And his address? Did he give you that?"

There was another nod.

"And asked you to write?"

This time it was a weakly reluctant

nod. The arm that had been so close about Anne's waist had relaxed by degrees. Now it slipped down until the hand rested on the boulder. The girl's gaze was fixed on the toes of her low, white canvas shoes.

Suddenly Anne was conscious of a chill in the air. The sun had gone down at their backs. A mist was spreading over the valley below them. The slope of Eagle Mountain was black with shadow, its crest sharply silhouetted against the pallid eastern sky. The clearing had vanished, unobserved by either.

But now, as her gaze swept the mountain-side and tentatively approximated the lost location, she had the answer to the question that had bothered her. It was evident why she had been brought here. Manifestly evident. Her earlier surmises were wrong. It was not for the view; it was not for the assuaging of her unrest. It was not even for opportunity to relate to her an experience that clamoured for relation. A score of places would have answered that purpose.

A wave of appreciative sympathy swept Anne's being. The child flowering into womanhood was in love; and out of the calloused depths of her own world-wisdom she had brought forth a rod to hurt her. Contrite, she turned and gathered her into her arms.

"Oh, my dear," she murmured, "how cruel I have been to you! I have trodden on your rose and bruised it, because I thought I saw a worm in its heart."

Julia, sobbing, pressed her face against the boarder's shoulder.

"What—what can I do to give it back to you? If I—I happened to be wrong—" Anne continued yearningly. "And it might be, you know. I do hope I have been."

"You are. I know you are," came in muffled tones from her shoulder.

There was silence for a little, and then Anne said:

"Let me write to him for you. That may help. I'll say I am a friend of yours—an older friend—and that you have told me of how kind he was to you. That I am stopping at your home and—let us see! Suppose I say that, as you couldn't tell your family, truthfully, of how you met, he might ostensibly call on me, and I'd see you properly introduced."

Julia lifted her eyes that were shining through tears.

"You darling!" she cried, delighted. "I can never repay you."

Anne kissed her, saying: "I think I know where he's stopping. He's at—Parmalee's. Isn't he?"

"How—how did you know that?" The green eyes were wide with wonder.

"It was self-evident, my dear. Otherwise we shouldn't be where we are at this moment."

"But you don't know his name. You couldn't know that, could you?"

"No. I couldn't know that. You'll have to tell me."

"I think it's a pretty name, myself. It's—Alan Woodward."

As if startled by a sound behind her Mrs. Wharton turned abruptly, and her averted face was hidden. *Alan Woodward!* Was there another man of that name? Or was it the same?

CHAPTER IV

Ten days had passed since the return of Julia, and the Brinton homestead was not like the same place. Constraint hung over it, oppressive as foul air. At meals there were sudden hushes and silences that were deadly, followed usually by precipitate bursts of speech, inept observations, palpably forced by desperate effort to appear natural and so disguise the prevailing absorption of each in something not to be shared.

Alma Fielder, sitting opposite her brother-in-law, was most obviously affected. Her colour came and went in many and sudden successions. She stammered, lost herself in the middle of a statement, totally forgot what had been said but a moment before, and

who said it. And her niece, seated on her right, was scarcely less deeply engrossed and fitfully embarrassed. Mrs. Wharton strove, and partially succeeded in it, to make it appear that she was affected merely by the attitude of these others. And Brinton, puzzled, but least changed of any, accepted the boarder's effort at its face value. Vainly he tried to restore to the normal the atmosphere of the tri-daily communion. In the privacy of his study, between meals, he questioned both Alma and Julia. Not once, but several times; yet with no definite success.

Alma had proved sullen. It was true, she admitted, that she had much on her mind. But it was not a matter she could speak of.

"You are still harbouring your antagonism to Mrs. Wharton," he suggested. "Is that it?"

No, it was not it. It was something altogether different, she contended. There was no use to ask her about it, because she couldn't tell him.

Julia, on the other hand, denied that there was anything.

"I just get this way, sometimes, Daddy," she insisted. "Unless I'm laughing all day you imagine I'm unhappy or have something on my mind. But I'm not a baby any more. I have moods, I suppose, like all other people, except dear you."

He called her attention to what he called a "change in her attitude" towards Mrs. Wharton.

"At first," he said, "you seemed so fond of her. The evening of the day you came home you took her up Lookout to see the shadows climb Eagle. For two or three days you and she were always together. Now you scarcely speak to her. I haven't seen you go out with her for nearly a week. Has your Aunt Alma said anything to you about her? Have you had any misunderstanding? Any words?"

Julia's fair head signalled a negative. "I haven't heard a thing," she answered. "And I think she's lovely. Only—I thought, maybe, I was tiring her; never leaving her alone."

Brinton did not contradict her. Perhaps she was right. She, really, was only a child, and the boarder was a woman of the world. They could have very little in common.

He did not want Mrs. Wharton to feel, though, that there was any attitude of unfriendliness beneath his roof. His own spirit of cordiality, so in evidence on the day of her coming, never slackened. Spurred now by the seeming dereliction of the others, it quickened. He became more and more attentive. He sought opportunities to interest and entertain her. He put the books of his library at her disposal. He introduced her to his work; explaining his methods, and dilating on his aims. For some years, in addition to his somewhat perfunctory creation of school histories, he had been engaged on a more ambitious creation. A volume for adult reading, dealing with American legends. For hours she listened spellbound to his recitals from the material he had collected for this purpose, charming him in turn, not merely by her appreciation, but by her intelligent and suggestive comment.

The picture that she made, sitting there against the pillows, in one corner of the low-backed sofa, of the library-study, on cool evenings, when a log fire was grateful; or in a deep, highbacked splint rocker, on the vine-trellised piazza, when the night was more temperate, was one which became lovelier and lovelier for him with each passing occasion. Already she had lost all sign of invalidism. She was no longer pallid, no longer obviously fragile. There had been a filling-out, a rounding, of both face and figure. There was more colour in her lips, less shadow about her eyes, so liquidly blue, and her dark brown hair, so smoothly brushed from its white side-parting, had taken on an added lustre. She wore white now, more often than black, the blouses turned back from a sharp V at the throat, the joining accentuated by an old-fashioned oval cameo brooch, which enhanced the fairness of her skin exposed above it.

More than once this picture of her had recurred to Brinton in his dreams, and there was hardly an hour of the day that he did not recall it. One morning, following an unusually long and pleasurable evening with her, he found himself, in a leisurely walk through the village, so lost in such retrospect as to be on the point of passing without recognition so old and close a friend as Simon Scudder.

It had required, indeed, a hand on his arm, accompanied by a spoken salutation, to arrest him; to drag him back, as it were, from the maze of abstraction into which he had so unconsciously strayed.

The meeting, as it eventuated, was, oddly enough, to resolve, and not very happily, the one problem that still lingered deterringly in his mind concerning the entire worthiness of Anne Wharton. For his friend Scudder, a fidgety and somewhat querulous little quidnunc, with whom few got on well, and who could never have lasted with Brinton as he had, had it not been for that man's divine charity, had noted Mrs. Wharton's appearance at the post-office, within a few days after her arrival in Northborough, and had ever since been restless with curiosity.

Handshaking over, and Brinton's apology for his preoccupation concluded, Scudder, without preamble, fell avidly upon his subject.

"I learned only last night, Dave," he began in his quick, nervous, piping staccato, tipping his antique Dunstable straw hat backward from his furrowed brow, and applying his silk handkerchief to the gathered perspiration, the morning being warm, "learned it over at Jamison's—that the slim, pale lady that used to dress in black, and now wears white most of the time, is staying up at your house."

Brinton, taken aback at this sudden restoration of a topic so recently in his thoughts, nodded confirmation; and the dapper little villager continued:

"Some kin of yours, eh?"

"No, not of mine," was David's equivocal answer.

"Oh, I see. Relative of Alma's I suppose."

"A friend, Simon. Just a friend."

The little man spread his narrow shoulders and inserted his thumbs in the armholes of his crash waistcoat. Then, with head canted and his small, faded eyes narrowed to mere steely slivers, he pressed:

"Known her about how long?"

Brinton proved himself the hundredth man. He laughed. More than that, he laid a lightly indulgent hand on his inquisitor's shoulder and let it rest there for a second or two with amiable affection.

"There, there, Simon," he said kindly; "she's a widow, to be sure, old friend; but she's much too young a widow for an old bones like you."

Mr. Scudder's face took on a momentary flush, kindled by mingled resentment and a sense of frustration. But it was only momentary. Then he smiled a little embarrassedly, and protested:

"God bless my soul, David, I hope you don't think I want to marry every woman I ask a question about."

"Heaven forbid," said David, slyly.

"It was only because of a resemblance," continued Simon. "And a very marked resemblance at that."

For a fraction of a second Brinton's eyes dropped. He was wondering whether he dared to seem interested.

"A resemblance?" he repeated at length.

"It hardly seems possible that two women could look so much alike," the little gossip went on. "But of course if this lady is a friend of yours and Alma's that puts it outside the range of reason that she could be also the woman whose picture was in the paper."

"Yes, I doubt that her picture was ever in any paper."

"Her name isn't Winchester, I suppose?" ventured Mr. Scudder.

"No. It isn't Winchester," Brinton confirmed.

"And she don't come from Nashville, Tennessee?"

"She comes from New York," her champion asserted.

But the combination of names had caused a half-awakening, an indeterminate stirring, of vague, latent memories. He struggled mentally for lucidity; for a connecting link that would make definite the nebulous suggestions—suggestions which, tenuous and misty as they were, held a hue of the unpleasant; of rather, indeed, the deplorable.

He became conscious now, as he stood groping, that they had been standing this little while just without the gate of Simon Scudder's antiquated, but neat, little cottage home. The arching chestnuts overspread them with an agreeably cool shade; but the narrow stone walk which led in to the veranda steps was blazing hot in the morning sunshine.

"If you've got a minute to spare, Dave," he heard his companion suggesting, "I'd just like you to look at that picture of the Winchester woman. Pictures, I suppose, I'd best say, for I've got about a dozen of 'em all told; though there's only one that looks such an awful lot like your visitor."

"The Winchester woman!" The phrase shot an illuminate gleam into the dim and dour corner of Brinton's memory in which that grim thing had been so elusively moving amid shadows. He remembered the story as for days—weeks even—it had occupied columns on the front page of his newspaper. It had been called "another Maybrick case!" in comparison with an English *cause célèbre* of the close of the last century. He had, however, failed to follow it with any great care. It had struck him as sordid—repulsive, even; and he had never learned its conclusion.

For the wife, accused of craftily accomplishing the poisoning of her husband, he had had, as for all matters of a criminal nature, scant interest. But now, suddenly lifted, as it were, by possibility, remote or imminent, into the very fore-front of the immediate, the subject took on for him a tremendously vital, and overwhelmingly serious, importance. And yet he was sensible, in the midst of his intense emotional disturbance, that to Simon Scudder, of all persons, he must give no sign.

How well he succeeded in dissembling the eagerness of his curiosity was a question which later caused him some measure of uneasiness. His next definite recollection was of being seated in Simon's square sitting-room, with its faded brown wall-paper, its musty and worn ingrain carpet, and its straight-backed, rush-bottomed chairs. On the ledge of the old-fashioned mahogany secretary beside him lay a score or more of newspaper clippings, each a chapter in the questionable story of the woman whose likeness he was holding with perfidiously trembling fingers before his unwilling, spectacle-aided eyes.

"You see, Dave," his garrulous old friend was chattering, "the way I come to take such an unusual interest in this case was because of my nephew, Lem Scudder. He's been practising law down in Nashville, and he was this woman's counsel. It was Lem that got her off scot-free, when there was a whole lot of damaging evidence against her. I don't just know myself how he did it. There's nothing in all these reports of the trial to show absolutely that she wasn't guilty. So I guess it must 'a' been Lem's eloquence with the jury. He always was a mighty impressive speaker."

Brinton lowered the paper he was holding and looked over the rims of his glasses at his flushed and feverish-appearing companion.

"So you think," he said, striving to exclude from his tone all but a passing interest, "that in spite of Mrs. Winchester's acquittal she may still have been guilty?"

"Well, it most assuredly does look that way to me," Mr. Scudder rather proudly admitted. "Lem is certainly a great advocate."

Having with an assumption of merely casual concern glanced over some other of the clippings, the visitor returned them to the ledge of the secretary and rose. Then, with an unveracious smile which he endeavoured to make appear natural, he said:

"There is some facial resemblance, to be sure. But a very slight one, as you'd see yourself, Simon, had you seen more of Mrs. Wharton. But that is the only similarity. Why, she is one of the sweetest, mildest, most inoffensive little women that I ever knew."

"Of course, of course," Mr. Scudder agreed. "I never thought for a minute it could be her after you telling me the lady was a friend of yours. But at first I kind of surmised as maybe you and Alma had decided to take a boarder. There's several in the village that are doing it. And that she just applied and you took her without knowing anything in particular about her."

"We—we know—*all* about her," Brinton stammered.

CHAPTER V

ANNE WHARTON had written to Mr. Alan Woodward on the morning following her talk with Julia. If it should by any chance be the Alan Woodward that she knew there was all the more reason for her to write, reluctant though she was to renew an acquaintance that she hoped had been ended for ever. In her letter she had requested him to call at the Brinton residence and ask for her; explaining that Julia had made her her confidante. But Mr. Woodward had not called, nor had he replied to her letter. And with each passing day she became more and more convinced that he intended to do neither. Her suspicions were thus confirmed. It was precisely what she might have expected. And she was glad for the girl's sake that she had thus been able to discourage the prolongation of a flirtation untouched by honourable intent.

Such frustration, however, was evidently the very last thing that the girl had wished for or looked forward to. Mrs. Wharton observed her change of attitude with regret, while congratulating herself on having saved her perhaps from a more lasting unhappiness. She was glad, too, that she had taken the precaution of showing Julia the letter before sealing it, and of giving it to her to post. There could, therefore, be no question as to whether she had deceived her by not writing, or have included anything to discourage the man's coming.

Anne was thinking of the matter as she moved about her bedchamber, dusting and tidying, on the morning that David was to have his chance meeting with Simon Scudder and the pregnant interview which followed. From her window she had just seen Mr. Brinton pass down the stone-flagged walk to the gate, and disappear in the direction of the village, when her attention was caught by a small, shabby, mud-stained gasoline vehicle stopping before the house, and a man alighting from it.

He was a young man in a Norfolk jacket and knickerbockers of brown tweed, and a cap of the same material, and russet shoes. A tall young man of quick, nervous movement. The visor of his cap half hid his face, but she recognized him instantly, nevertheless.

It was Alan Woodward. *Her* Alan Woodward.

Before she quite realized what she was doing—acting wholly on a swiftly sudden impulse, she was half-way downstairs; her one aim to reach the door and open it and face him before he could ring the bell.

He had one foot on the veranda as she stood on the door sill confronting him, a challenge in her round dark eyes. At sight of her he paused, taken aback. Then, abruptly, he snatched off his cap, revealing a rumpled head of dark, sandy hair. He was about to speak, but she checked him, laying a forefinger across her lips.

Then, softly closing the screen door behind her, she moved off to the right, gesturing to him to follow, and thus led him around the corner of the veranda to where the screening vine-covered trellis was—a spot on which no window looked forth, a nook hidden from the road. There were chairs there, and a table, and a hammock.

"Please sit down," she said.

But he hesitated. Ordinarily self-contained, he was now half-dazed with astonishment.

"God!" he said under his breath. "This *is* a surprise! You here, of all women!"

She frowned, pointing to a chair.

He gripped the back of it in his nervously impulsive way, dragging it to a new position, and its feet scraped the floor with a shrill, rasping sound which tortured her. She had been so striving for quiet. Controlling herself, she sat down softly where she could face him, in the hope of influencing him to caution by her example.

Throwing his cap on the table at his left, he dropped heavily to the chair-seat and began fumbling in the pocket of his jacket, from which he produced a cigarette-case.

"Please! Please don't!" she begged in a whisper.

His first expression was one of surprise. He was about to ask: "Why not?" Then, with a shrug of annoyance, he dropped the case back again.

"I—I am Mrs. Wharton," she told him.

For the briefest moment he seemed not to take it in. Then he laughed, a derisive chuckle.

"That's funny," he declared. "I thought I'd seen Mrs. Wharton's handwriting before. But I never for a moment—God! That *is* funny!"

"I wasn't sure it was you, you know. There must be other Alan Woodwards in the world."

"But you took a chance, eh?"

"Yes, I took a chance."

"If you'd known—if you'd been sure—you wouldn't have written, I suppose."

"Probably not. I should have tried to persuade her never to see you. To forget you."

"You'd have told her you knew me?"

"Unquestionably. That and—more."

His lip curled in sinister defiance.

"Now," he said, "it will be up to me to tell her something. Haven't you thought of that? Wouldn't it have been better for you to keep under cover?"

"For my own sake, yes, it probably would. But I can't spare myself at such sacrifice to her. That is what I made you sit down here to tell you." She was very calm, very determined.

"You think she'll believe you, rather than me?"

"I think her father will."

"Oh, I see!" he retorted with an amused smile. "You mean to make a clean breast of everything to the old man. He'll put a lot of faith in what you tell him, knowing at the start-off that you've been living in the bosom of his family under a name that isn't your own, and that you are really so—will you pardon me if I say—notorious?"

"I'll have to risk that. And I'm quite willing to."

Woodward's hand again sought and produced the cigarette-case.

"You'll have to risk something else, too," he went on composedly. "I'm off duty just now. Fishing and resting up. But I can't consistently let a news-spread like this get by me. The whole country's been wondering what became of you. A picturesquely intimate interview will be the biggest kind of a scoop. And, believe me, my dear, I'm just the boy to write it."

"I expected that," she told him. "But, after all, it's not such a great price to pay for an innocent girl's honour and happiness." A cigarette was now between his lips and he was about to strike a match. "Do you mind waiting just a minute before smoking?" she asked.

For answer the match blazed and a deep inhalation followed.

"Why can't you keep your hands off?" he said suddenly. "I don't mean any harm to the kid. I'm in love with her. Honestly in love with her. She's different, you know. I—I'll marry her."

"And your present wife?"

"I haven't any. Divorced her—three months ago."

"That isn't true," Anne rejoined. "I know it isn't true."

"You know better than I do, eh? All the same you're wrong and I'm right. And I can prove it. Keep your

hands off and I'll let the scoop slide. I'll pretend I never saw you in my life before. That's fair, isn't it?"

But she did not answer. She was listening. The sound of the screen-door opening had carried to her. Now there were footsteps on the veranda. Light footsteps, coming nearer. A cloud of cigarette smoke was floating around the corner of the house, borne by the soft summer air which was being wafted in that direction.

Anne's gaze turned, waiting; and Alan Woodward rose abruptly, his eyes following hers. The next instant Julia Brinton came into view, and stood, her cheeks blazing with sudden crimson.

"Why—why, Mr. Woodward!" she cried in startled but glad surprise. "I was just going to—" And then she remembered Mrs. Wharton's presence and was mute.

To Anne, though, the five words, coupled with the fact that Julia was enticingly frocked in sheer cambric and wearing her most becoming hat of Leghorn straw, wreathed in cornflowers of brilliant blue, were full of significance.

"Mr. Woodward and I, dear, are old acquaintances," she said to shorten the pause. "We happened to meet at the door, and I've been detaining him."

She stood up now as the caller had done at sight of the girl, and was continuing:

"He hasn't told me yet why he didn't answer my letter, or call on me, as I asked him to."

And turning to him, she asked with affected cordiality:

"Why was it?"

"I've been away," he answered with quick adaptability. "Only received it this morning, and came at once. So, now that we're all here together, maybe you'll present me to Miss Brinton."

And he smiled broadly at what he considered a very clever turning of the tables.

"Everything considered," Mrs. Wharton returned, "that now seems hardly necessary. Are you going for a drive, dear?"

Julia's colour, which had receded, again mounted. Her embarrassment appeared painful. Anne did not wait for the delayed response.

"Because," she went on, "I think, if you are, you had better see your Aunt Alma first. She may want you to do an errand for her."

But Julia failed to stir. Her discomfort, apparently, waxed more burdensome.

"If you'd rather I'd ask her, I will," the boarder pursued. "I won't be a minute."

And she brushed by the discomfited guilty ones, disappearing an instant later within the house.

No sooner was she gone than the mute Julia found voice. Hidden by the screening trellis, she caught eagerly at Woodward's hand, lifting to him solicitous green eyes.

"Oh, Alan!" she murmured distressfully. "Why *did* you come here? I told you never to come. I knew this might happen. My clock stopped and—"

"I waited nearly half an hour for you," he interrupted. "And when you didn't show up, darling, I was sure you were ill or something and nothing could have kept me away another minute. I had to come. That's how I love you."

"But I won't be able to go with you now. I know I won't. She'll tell Aunt Alma, and—"

"Of course she'll stop it," Woodward lamented. "What won't a jealous woman do? And that's what's the matter with your boarder. She's so jealous of you she'll hesitate at nothing to keep you from me. I'll tell you. I'd better be off now, and I'll send you word to-morrow what is best to do. Or, no, wait! Letters aren't safe. I'll meet you to-morrow at two, same place, and arrange everything. That's best. And meanwhile if you love me, you'll make up your mind to come away with me."

Hurriedly, having embraced and kissed her, he stepped beyond the screening trellis, and vaulting the veranda railing, crossed the lawn, passed through the gate and sprang into his

shabby, mud-coated car, which vanished down the road.

A moment later Alma Fielder, in evident agitation, appeared on the veranda, calling:

"Julia! Julia! Where are you, child?"

The girl turned the corner of the house with dragging, reluctant footsteps.

"What's this that Mrs. Wharton tells me?" her aunt demanded. "You're not going automobile riding with any strange young man. I'm surprised you should think of such a thing."

Julia made no reply.

"You must excuse yourself," her aunt went on. "Do you hear me?"

Julia nodded.

"Don't get excited, Aunt Alma," she ventured at length. "I'm not going. But he wasn't a strange young man. He's a friend of Mrs. Wharton's. And he's a perfect gentleman."

"All the same your father doesn't know him, and I don't. He's never called here till this morning. Why, I don't know what you could be thinking of. Where is he?"

"Gone," was Julia's laconic answer.

Miss Fielder sighed in relief. "Well, it's a good thing he has. At the same time I don't see why Mrs. Wharton should have such callers. He can't be much or she wouldn't ask me to stop your going with him. I wish to goodness we'd never taken her to board. After this, you keep away from her friends. Do you understand?"

Julia nodded again. Then she passed her aunt, went into the house, and up to her room, where, having torn off her hat, she threw herself down on her bed, and burst into a storm of tears.

"The whole world is against me," she told herself.

CHAPTER VI

SIMON SCUDDER'S unexpected disclosure had set surging in David Brinton a bewildering welter of complex emotions. It was like the dropping of acid into a clear glass of alkaline bicarbonate. The whole admixture bubbled and boiled with an opaque effervescence. Conscientiously, habitually systematic, he executed his morning errands with as scrupulous a care as he ordinarily devoted to this portion of his daily routine; yet, always, through the warp and woof of his mental processes ran the conflicting strands of this problem, so abruptly presented and so engrossingly serious.

And when, finally, these duties completed, he turned his steps homeward, he chose to prolong the journey by means of a seldom traversed, circuitous route for the express purpose of gaining time and freedom from interruption in which gravely to consider and justly to attribute.

There was no doubt in his mind of the identity of Anne Wharton and the so-called "Winchester woman." That had been demonstrated to him, not by anything so fallible as a mere likeness between a photograph, reproduced crudely in a newspaper, and a living face as he had come to know it in something less than a fortnight of intimate association under his own rooftree, but by so small, yet convincing, a thing as a cameo brooch of unique shape and bizarre workmanship.

At first sight of the half-tone in the clipping this odd bit of jewellery had caught his eyes with convicting certainty even before he saw the face itself More than once, of late, he had spoken of the brooch to its wearer, and had learned that it was an heirloom from her mother, for whom it had been made by a young jeweller of Whitby, in England; a consumptive lad in whom she had taken a charitable interest.

It struck Brinton as curiously fateful that about the only mention of relatives or friends made by Mrs. Wharton had been in connection with this brooch, which in the end was to be the means of opening the door to the chamber in which lay her carefully and closely guarded secret. And it occurred to him now, too, that his interpretation of the closed and tied *o* and *a* of her letter

was fully borne out. Confined to a single word, he had chosen to believe that her reticence hinged on a single subject, occurrence or event. And that it had been revealed in that particular word "isolated" because it was by reason of this one zealously-held secret that she most desired isolation.

In his cursory glance over the text of the Scudder clippings he had caught glimpses of allegations which by no reach of the imagination could he ever reconcile with the wearer of the brooch as he knew her. Some of the phrases recurred to him now, as unmindful of the burning sun, he plodded slowly with head bent in thought along the dusty country road, between meadows in which cattle grazed, and wide-spreading fields of ripening grain.

They were horrid phrases, reeking, many of them, with a brutally frank significance, which caused a shudder to ripple like a chill adown the vertebræ of the shocked and sympathetic Brinton. For, in spite of them, in spite of Simon Scudder's freely expressed scepticism, his heart and his faith were quite altogether with that pallid, frail woman in mourning who had so recently become a member of his household, who had at their first meeting so unveiled herself to him, in a way, with her quotation about poetry being the sister of sorrow, about suffering and tears, and the heart as a poem. Nor was there anything in their more recent intercourse, now that she was beginning to bloom afresh, to make him less sympathetic or less loyal.

And yet, unbelievable as her guilt seemed to him, inclined as he was to mercy, the question which gave him battle was as to whether he had the right to be thus led, unresisting and unquestioning, by his own charitable inclinations; permitting the while a continuance of that intimacy with his family which her residence in his house of necessity involved.

Under this newly arisen condition, in view of all that he had learned—in view, indeed, of all that perhaps might be true though he had not learned it—was he, as a conscientious father and brother-in-law privileged to permit this association to continue?

It was, in the end, this consideration of Julia that decided him. Not only was she of an impressionable age, but of an exceptionally impressionable nature; and it was a fear lest in some way, occult even, too innocently subtle for either intention or discernment, she should be influenced by that which lay secret beneath an impeccable exterior.

He wished now that he might have read what her counsel had so eloquently pleaded in "the Winchester woman's" defence. Since it had weighed so strongly with the jury, how much more convincing might it have been to him, already prejudiced in her favour!

Having thus reached a decision and been assured of its justice by subsequent reflection, Brinton found before him a second, and almost equally trying problem. How was he, without divulging so much as a hint of what he had learned, to bring about the departure of Mrs. Wharton, and at the same time spare Julia and Alma from all knowledge of the woman's miserable story? So formidable loomed the undertaking that more than once this kindly man was driven back to a reconsideration of the original question. And when at length he came to what is called the wood road, an umbrose avenue, cool and wonderfully still, winding through a strip of forest, to issue finally within a hundred yards of his own back door, he was still in earnest mental debate.

Walking hat in hand through the grateful cool of the wood he had eventually progressed to a tentative putting together of the sentence with which to broach the subject to the unhappy woman, when, in rounding a sharp turn of the road, his design was cast woefully askew by his coming abruptly upon the hapless lady of his thoughts, looking anything but that as she smiled up at him in calm recognition from a mossy seat at the foot of an ancient oak.

An added effect of the unexpected encounter was palpable disturbance of Brinton's usual ease of manner. His greeting, though meant to be cordial,

was, as he realized in a degree, strained. He saw that she observed this, and it tended further to rob him of his habitual composure and felicity of address. But Mrs. Wharton was more solicitous than surprised.

"You're tired, Mr. Brinton," she declared anxiously, springly lightly to her feet. "I can see you are. You've been walking in the hot sun, and it's been a little too much for you. Do, please, sit here and lean back against the tree. It's wonderfully restful."

But Brinton could not be persuaded. He insisted that he was "all right."

"I'll tell you," he went on, "you sit right where you were, and, if it will please you, I'll rest a bit on the boulder there," indicating a conveniently located stone across the road.

It would please her, she said; and Brinton sat down.

The effect of the incident was to restore, in a measure at least, his self-command. And it occurred to him that he might not again have so fitting an opportunity for the exercise of the distasteful yet obligatory duty on which he had been dwelling.

She, however, had already taken the guidance of the conversation into her own capable hands. And as he interestedly listened, fascinated by the melodic charm of her soft, purling Southern prolation, never so manifest as now; and even more by an underlying, indefinable, yet all pervading quality of personality, so utterly at odds with everything he had heard or suspected, he came to question whether, after all, he had not been too hasty in his judgment and too severe in his sentence.

She had begun by telling him how, on the day following her arrival in Northborough, she had found this spot in the forest's heart, and how, nearly every day since, she had spent happy hours here in reading and meditation, with only the birds, the squirrels and the chipmunks for companions. And at this his reason had rallied, reinforcing his sentiment and his inclination, with the question as to how it would be possible for her, were her hands stained by a crime so heinous, to face here in the awful silence of this arboreal temple, the ever-condemning visage of her own wretched conscience.

Thus engrossed in analysis of the emergent situation, Brinton's replies and answers were for the most part perfunctory. Indeed, for a little, he became so totally lost in revery as quite to miss the thread of what she was saying. So that when, all at once, he was caught up by an abrupt change of tone, a lowered key, a still softer cadence, he listened intently enough, yet all the while conscious that he should never know just how she had approached this astounding disclosure, or whether it was something in his own manner which had invited it.

"I knew the first moment I saw you, down on the station platform, that I should tell you some day." Those were the first words that came to him at the moment of his arresting.

He saw that she was no longer looking at him. She was leaning forward, and her eyes were on her white hands, folded together on her scarcely whiter lap. All her old pallor appeared to have returned to her, and for some reason —possibly it was her pose, leaning forward that way with shoulders bent— she seemed more frail than ever.

"I didn't think it would be so soon," she went on quietly, as if talking to herself. "I didn't see how I could bear to speak of it again, ever. And yet I knew that I should—to you. Oh, just to you. Because I felt, somehow, even then, that you would have a right to know, and that, whether I told you or not, you would learn it all, surely, in some way. And that if you learned it from someone else you wouldn't, maybe, just understand, as I was sure—always so sure—you would if I told you."

She paused for a moment, but she neither moved nor looked up; and the solemn stillness which enfolded them seemed to Brinton like some tangible thing; some great, silent, sympathetic witness that sat bowed, with closed eyes and bent ear, listening, not alone to the woman's words, but to the throbbing

of her heart. He sat, himself, very still, with clasped hands between his knees and his gaze resting on her like a caress.

And now she was going on again, telling him much that he already knew, but in a different way, with illuminating side lights, and thoroughly human touches that appealed both to his reason and his sympathies. Telling it all, too, in her calm, low voice, which quavered at times the least bit.

One of these times, he remembered afterward, was when she had spoken of the child that had never lived, and of her own bruised body, and the imprint of a brutal, murderous boot-toe.

Whether the recital had occupied minutes or hours Brinton could never determine definitely. He knew only that the pose of neither ever changed; that he had sat there unmoving throughout it all, silent, too, and that the picture of her—that delicate, trustful figure in white, with drooping head and lowered eyes, would last always in his memory.

When it was over and the tension of the telling was relaxed, she wept, and Brinton, his mind swept wholly clear of all prejudice, his fear of an evil influence, remote if not fanciful, overcome and routed by a resurgent and more catholic charity, rising from his seat on the boulder and crossing the little dividing space, rested for just a moment a soothing, gentle hand upon the satin softness of her shining dark hair.

He did not speak to her. Somehow, it appeared to him—possibly to them both—that there was no need of words; that to say he believed her would be only to cheapen—to add alloy to the pure virgin gold of their complete understanding, of which the very air and light, it seemed, must hold a concordant consciousness.

CHAPTER VII

The absence of his daughter from her place at the dinner-table that noontide proved the one incident of sufficient potency to distract Brinton's contemplation from the events of the morning. For two or three minutes after sitting down with the others his glance had fluttered between her vacant chair and the open doors to drawing-room and hall, his cooling soup untouched. Twice he had interrupted the process to let it rest enquiringly upon the face of his sister-in-law. But both times she had, apparently with purpose, averted her eyes.

"Where is Julia?" he at length asked.

"She has a headache. She is in her room," Alma answered. And there was that in her accompanying look which he read as an endeavour to discourage any further pursuance of the subject.

He was not, however, to be thus easily diverted. A headache that could keep his child from a meal was without precedent, and therefore too serious to be lightly ignored. He recalled now the recent change in her demeanour, and was stricken with an engulfing dread of serious illness.

"But Julia never has headaches," he pursued, his anxiety reflected in his tone. "Have you seen her? Perhaps she's feverish. I've noticed that she hasn't been quite like herself for some days. Hadn't we better send for Dr. Morly?"

Miss Fielder coloured. Why would David never realize that they were not alone? That there were matters impossible of discussion in the presence of a third party—practically a stranger; a boarder? She had tried to warn him, but he had been obstinately blind to her signal. Well, then, he should have the truth.

"There's nothing in the world the matter with her but temper," she snapped acridly. "I found it necessary to reprimand her, and she resented it."

"Wouldn't it have been better to consult me first?" he asked quietly.

"You weren't here, and—I had to act at once. She was going automobiling with a—with an absolutely strange young man."

"Really?" he asked in confusion. "That isn't like Julia. I—I can't reconcile it. Did she tell you where she had met him? Anything about him?"

"Only that Mrs. Wharton introduced him," and she flung an accusing glance at the boarder.

Brinton also looked at Anne. "If he was a friend of Mrs. Wharton's—" he began. But before he could say more Mrs. Wharton interrupted him.

"He was not a friend," she corrected. "Only an acquaintance. I feared that you might disapprove, and so told Miss Fielder of what he proposed."

"I see. And—and you, Alma? You saw him?"

"No. He'd gone when I got there."

"Then you didn't stop it, really, after all? Are you sure that Julia didn't decline of her own accord?"

"Mrs. Wharton said that she was going."

"Pardon me," Anne corrected. "I said I feared that Julia was about to go. I gathered that she saw no harm in it, poor child."

"May I ask who the young man was?" David said.

"A newspaper man from New York who is spending his vacation at Parmalee's. I met him in the South."

Then, looking straight at Brinton, she added, with purposed illumination: "He was down there reporting a trial for his paper."

"And he called here this morning to see you?"

"Yes. I heard that he was at Parmalee's for the fishing, and wrote him, asking him to come."

"And—and Julia?"

"She happened to come out on the veranda while we were talking."

After a moment's silence Brinton observed: "What puzzles me is why Julia should take the matter so to heart. I can't see anything in what you both tell me to give her a headache or keep her from her dinner."

Impulsively Mrs. Wharton rose from the table and dropped her napkin beside her plate.

"I'll go to her," she announced, "and see if I can persuade her to come down."

As she left the room David Brinton, having already murmured his thanks, followed her with appreciative eyes.

"An admirable woman," he commented, *sotto voce*, half to himself, yet not low enough to escape the hearing of his sister-in-law.

Miss Fielder's lips tightened and her colour deepened.

"Good heavens, David!" she exclaimed irritably. "What fools you men are!"

The outbreak so unusual, so out of keeping with the Alma character as hitherto revealed to him, startled him, robbing him for the minute of words with which to reply.

"How under the sun you can be so blind is enough to drive a sane person half crazy. Admirable, indeed! She's a snake in the grass. I've seen it from the first. I can't make out what it is, but she's come here to hide something. She wants a refuge, and she's making up to you, David, determined you shall give it to her. Not for this summer only, but for life."

"Oh, Alma!" he found voice to exclaim. "That's absurd!"

"It's the truth," she maintained. "A one-eyed person could see that. She's acting every minute. Of course she didn't want Julia to go automobile-riding with this acquaintance of hers. She was afraid he might let something drop about her. That was the reason. Or part of it. The other part was to show you, or make you believe, how interested she is in your child. But Julia doesn't like her. That first evening was enough for her. She's hardly spoken to her since. And now she's trying to make it appear to you that she has enough influence with your daughter to quiet her aching head and fetch her down to the table, when I couldn't make her so much as unlock her door. But she's undertaken more than she can accomplish. You see if she hasn't. Julia'll send her back with a flea in her ear. You see if she doesn't."

Brinton smiled tolerantly. "I'm sorry you're so bitter, Alma," was all he said. It was useless to discuss the matter with her. He knew now so much more than she did. And, having learned it as he had, to reveal so much even as a hint

of the sadly touching story would have been a most unpardonable breach of confidence.

As for Julia's seeming change of attitude towards Mrs. Wharton, he had had from her a perfectly satisfactory explanation. And, as if to corroborate this, there had been the incident of this morning. Had there been a coolness between them it was inconceivable that the girl could have met this newspaperman friend of Mrs. Wharton's and been asked to go driving with him. No, the two edges of the thing didn't join.

But, in one way, Alma Fielder was right. David's sight was not all it should have been. Otherwise, he would have seen through his sister-in-law. And he didn't. She resented the intimacy that had grown up between him and Mrs. Wharton—writhed, even, over those long tête-à-tête evenings of communion in the study-library or behind the veranda trellis—because she was inordinately fond of David herself and had always believed that some day, in the not very distant future, she would, herself, be asked to fill her dead sister's place in his life, not, as now, merely in one respect—that of housekeeper—but wholly, in all ways, as wife, and mother to his daughter.

Five minutes passed in silence. Then faintly there came to them the echo of light footsteps descending the stairs. Brinton's eyes turned to the door which opened on the hall, an expectant light in them. Another instant and the light was one of gladness.

Julia and Mrs. Wharton had come in together, smiling, their arms locked.

"You see it wasn't such a bad headache, after all," said the boarder.

CHAPTER VIII

RULED so largely by impulse as Julia Brinton was, there were, nevertheless, occasions when, giving herself up to a more or less ruthlessly honest introspection, she listened heedingly to the dictates of a cool, discerning, and rather canny judgment. It had been so on this morning, so provocative of emotional stress and agitation. Impulse had sent her flying to the privacy of her room and locked her in. It had flung her in an agony of self-pity outstretched across the immaculate whiteness of her virginal bed and loosed the floodgates of her tears. It had dictated, too, her acerbate refusal to admit her Aunt Alma, and her invention of a headache as excuse for her action.

In the interval preceding the coming of Mrs. Wharton, however, the young woman had achieved a contrasting calm, born of a more or less exhaustive and repetitional weighing of the phases or circumstances of her experience, and, though her first inclination was to treat this intrusion as she had the other, she promptly adopted the wiser, as it seemed now to her, second course and admitted the suppliant.

Even as she turned back the key in her door a dozen questions framed themselves in her mind—vital questions that she could not, consistently, restrain while there was a chance left of having them answered. Her pride might forbid, but there was something within her more compelling than pride. And it was separate and apart from ordinary curiosity. It had to do with love and desire, with her peace of mind; with the whole colour of her present and her future: involving, she believed, either an endless grief or an unceasing happiness.

Yet in the presence of the boarder she stood, at first, silent and a little shame-stricken, the questioning halted and held in abeyance by the swift urgency of her visitor's:

"Come, hurry, my dear! Your father's waiting dinner for you. I know how you feel. But you must be brave. Bathe your face. He mustn't know you've been crying. Just as quickly as you can, now. All it needs is a little cold water. Please, please make haste. And we'll go down together."

Caught up by the stronger mind, swayed by the more positive personality, Julia obeyed without protest. And, as she poured the water from her ewer into her basin, saturated her dainty,

blue-edged washcloth, and padded coolingly her too-pink eyelids and laved her too-pale and slightly discoloured cheeks, Mrs. Wharton continued less rapidly and in a slightly lowered tone:

"And after dinner, Julia dear, you and I will go down to the glen together and talk everything over. I want you to look on me as if I were your elder sister, if you can. There's nothing I wouldn't do for you. I'm sure you've been hating me for what happened this morning. But you'll understand when you know. I'm sure you will. And now, because you are doing what I ask you, I'll make everything easy for you at the table. I've already smoothed things pretty well, and if you'll only rely on me I'll finish them."

It was this promise that had worked the miracle of readjustment and restored harmony, even to the linked arms and Julia's fainter reflection of the boarder's sunny, gladsome smile.

And the complete disconcertion of Miss Fielder on finding her prophecies set at naught aided not a little in relieving any lingering embarrassment on the part of the others.

"I think," Anne ventured in pursuance of her policy of making light of the reported headache, "that it must have been just a touch of neuralgia. I've had it. It comes suddenly, and while it lasts it seems almost unbearable. But it goes usually as quickly as it comes."

"That sounds to me perfectly reasonable," Brinton agreed. "I hope, my daughter, you'll have no return of it."

The glen, of which Mrs. Wharton had spoken as the scene of the proposed afternoon conference, lay but a stone's throw distant from the spot which that morning had witnessed her revelation to the girl's father. It dipped suddenly from a point on the left of the wood road, where a rude wooden bridge spanned a small waterfall of barely ten feet. Following a more gradual descent the falling water divided the glen as a shallow, murmuring brook, above the surface of which stones, worn smooth by attrition in times of freshet, lifted their grey surfaces and formed a means of dry crossing.

At a point a little way down the stream there was a rustic summer-house, built by a tenant of the property years ago and of late fallen into a state of age-worn and weather-beaten decrepitude. Here, in the cool of these forest depths, shaded by the verdure of boughs which met and embraced above the narrow stream, Anne and Julia sat side by side on a sagging seat of the summer-house, as ten days ago they had sat on the boulder at the top of Lookout Hill.

The girl, in the beginning, had been distinctly ill-at-ease. She had relapsed in a measure into that condition of restraint which for a week at least had marked her attitude towards the woman who wished so earnestly to be her friend. And it had been Anne's part to restore once more her confidence and re-establish their relation to a more friendly and mutually sympathetic footing.

There was something, she felt sure, that had risen between them to cause this breach: something that Julia had learned, or fancied, or imagined, and was stubbornly hiding from her. She had thought at first—until to-day, in fact—that it had to do with her having written that letter to Alan Woodward, which, instead of bringing him openly, had apparently only kept him away altogether. But it had been made plain to her on the veranda, that morning, that, unknown to her, he and Julia had evidently communicated in the interim. That cry of surprise: "Why—why, Mr. Woodward, I was just going to—!" taken in connection with the girl's careful attiring and all that had followed, had told the fact, while it concealed the details. She asked herself, now, whether it was reasonable to think that they had actually met in secret. And if so, whether he had told Julia anything of her story. But almost instantly she realized that this latter question had already been answered. For it was very evident, even if he had received the letter which he denied receiving, that he

must have failed to connect the signature, "Anne Wharton," with the "Agatha Winchester" he had once known.

She was sitting silent for just a minute now while these thoughts raced through her mind, and she debated whether it would be wise to force the issue with a frankly-put question. Her elbow rested on a broken bit of railing, and her gaze had strayed a little beyond their shelter to where a robin was making short, quick runs and sudden pauses over the dank sward. He paused just then where the light breeze had lifted a frond of fern, revealing beneath it a torn half-page of note paper, on which there showed three or four lines of writing in a heavy, vertical hand.

Something apparently quite outside of herself impelled Anne to its possession, and she had slipped beneath the broken rail and snatched it up before she was really quite conscious of what she was doing.

Julia, who had also at the moment been deep in as earnest meditation, turned sharply at her companion's agile exit, to see her standing there, not more than two yards away, a fragment of paper in her hand and her eyes bent upon it. Intuitively the girl realized what was happening. She remembered instantly the occasion of a torn letter; of how she had recovered all but one of its four severed pieces; and of how that fourth bit had so aggravatingly eluded her.

Before she could check herself she was crying:

"Oh, Mrs. Wharton, please—"

But she was already too late.

Anne had taken it in to the last word.

She had read:

"*. . . must see you again on Wednesday. I'll be waiting in the summer-house at three o'clock. Oh, dearest, I'm so wretched! I never slept a wink all last night. What can you think of me? I want to hear you say again that I have not been wicked, and that you'll . . .*"

She turned at Julia's cry, her fingers busy, even then, in tearing the secret into smaller and smaller bits. In her eyes, so deeply and liquidly blue, there was a serious sadness but no reproach. There was rather a sort of stricken yearning. She did not return as she had slipped out, but passed on a few steps farther to the entrance, still pursuing her work of destruction, which she ended by throwing the final infinitely tiny morsels into the air to be caught by the light breeze and carried off like thistle-down or snowflakes.

She entered quickly then to catch the risen and panic-stricken Julia in closely enfolding arms, pressing her warm and vibrant young body to her breast, and whispering gentle, kindly, sisterly words of love and reassurance.

"Your secret's safe with me, darling," she crooned softly. "It's for the best that I should know it. For I, dear, of all persons, can understand as well as sympathize. You see, I've been through it all myself, and—oh, much more—things hideously worse, too. And all because, like you, I had no mother to guide me, or warn me. Nor no older sister, either; nor, even, a boarder in the house, such as myself now, who might have seen, in her broader knowledge of the world, and—and, at least, done what she could."

The girl was sobbing now as if her heart would break, and Anne released one arm from about her that she might pat in soft caress the bowed head resting against her shoulder, as she went on in the same strain, pleading for full confidence and unwavering trust. It was no time, then, she knew, to tell her of the real Alan Woodward and his iniquitous unworthiness. For it was plainly evident that she had given her heart and soul to him in the first awakening of her fresh young womanhood, and that she was not prepared for the casting-down of her idol.

That must come later. For the present she could be asked only to wait, while Anne would pray and work, diligently and tactfully, hoping that, meanwhile, the creature would reveal himself, or that Julia's eyes might be miraculously opened.

They sat down again presently, and after a little the sobbing seemed to wear itself out. Following this, with almost startling abruptness, the young woman wiped her eyes and her tear-stained cheeks, and in tones still somewhat choked, reproached herself openly for her loss of self-control.

"I'm such a baby!" she said, with a sniffle. "And I'm so ashamed of myself. And—and—oh, dear!—you are so good to me, when I don't deserve it a bit that anyone should be. You, really, least of all. For I have been horrid to you. I know I have."

"Horrid, dear! How?"

"Oh, you must have seen. But—but it was all because I was doing something behind your back that I had promised you I wouldn't. I—I've been seeing him, here, almost every afternoon. Yesterday he couldn't come, and we were to meet this morning instead."

"Yes, yes, I know," Anne said soothingly. "But we won't speak of that. And you must not think of it. We must look ahead, now, dear. Looking back won't help matters in the least. And, remember, I'm not going to reproach you, ever. It was all my fault for binding you to a promise. I should have known better."

"And—and, you see," Julia protested, for it occurred to her just then that, having herself been so magnanimously relieved of all blame, a defence of her lover was demanded, "he never received your letter. If he had it would have been different."

Anne, though convinced that her letter had not miscarried, made no denial. "Alas, how easily things go wrong!" she quoted. "Do you love him very much, dear?"

Julia nodded, turning her face away to hide the risen blush.

"Very much," she murmured.

"Of course you do. And nothing could change you, could it?"

"I don't think so. Not anything."

"Suppose you learned that he was married? That his wife is still living? Would that?"

There was a moment of hesitation. Then:

"He isn't married. I know he isn't. He told me. But, even if he was, I'd feel just the same. It would be wrong, I know. But—I—I—Oh, how could I help it?"

"Of course you couldn't," said Anne. No. The time for revelation, for attempted disillusion, was not yet. To be of any service to her she must, for the time being, float beside her in the same current, as those twin twigs there in the brook. To oppose her, to try to head her off would be but to court disaster, to lose her.

She was wondering, though, back of all this marshalling of subtle purpose, whether the bit of writing she had read meant all that it so noxiously suggested.

CHAPTER IX

For the rest of that day and throughout the morning of the next, Anne managed, without apparent intention, to keep in closest touch with the aberrant Julia. When she was not with her she knew precisely where she was. She had not attempted to exact another promise from her. There had, indeed, been not so much as an implied understanding. As certain as she had ever been certain of anything that a tryst with Woodward had been made and was to be kept, she had waited vainly for the girl to confess it. Beyond pleading for a confidence without reserve she had asked no questions and would ask none. Above all things, she felt, she must not appear inquisitive. It was a matter for the most delicate handling, and a single false move might open the door to irreparable consequences. For she sensed that, in spite of all that had happened and been said in the summer house, or afterwards, there was, on Julia's part an underlying questioning of motive, which was inducive of reservation and a certain attitude of withdrawal.

And this, indeed, was the fact. For, throughout the entire experience there had been in the girl's mind a persistent echo of Alan Woodward's hurried

words in the interval following Mrs. Wharton's exit from the veranda:

"She's so jealous of you she'll hesitate at nothing to keep you from me."

Following dinner on the second day Julia had gone to her room, and a few minutes later Anne, too, had retired to hers, taking care lightly to mount the stairs, so that no sound of her steps might echo, and as noiselessly to enter her own chamber and close the door upon her.

Her room and Julia's adjoined. Originally they had been a single large apartment. But in the remodelling of the old house it had been divided, and the separating wall was so thin that even the faintest sounds penetrated.

The boarder sat down softly close to this wall and near the window out of which she had witnessed the appearance of Alan Woodward on the morning of the preceding day. Julia, just beyond the frail partition, was moving about restlessly. She heard her open a closet-door. Evidently she was about to make a change of toilet. Then the creak of a chair came to her. A shoe dropped to the floor. In this way Anne followed almost every detail of the change. A little travelling clock facing her from her bureau, across the room, told her that it was not quite half-past one, and she argued that the appointment, probably at the summer house, had been made for two. For a little while she considered the advisability of forestalling the meeting by arming herself with a book and going there to read, but rejected it as too obvious. Neither could she consider eavesdropping from ambush. Such a course might be justified by the circumstances and the merit of the object to be attained; but all her instincts rebelled against it.

Eventually she determined not to anticipate, but to follow. When she had heard Julia leave her room and go down the stairs she waited a moment watching from behind the curtain of her window and listening for the opening and closing of the screen door. But when no sound came to her, or no girlish figure emerged on to the flagged path, she was more than ever convinced of the tryst and its location. She ran out into the passage, and along it to the bathroom at its farther end. And from the bathroom window she saw her self-chosen charge crossing quickly and with evident stealth through the vegetable garden, to disappear a few seconds later amid the network of trees that formed the outer border of the wood.

Returning to her room for hat, sunshade and book, Anne descended and left the house by the front exit. Her course was less direct, but it was designedly so. Moreover her destination was not quite the same. For she had decided, at length, on her own favourite nook at that turn of the wood road where but yesterday she had told her own story to this girl's father. It was not within sight of the summer house, nor even the brook, its waterfall, or the bridge that crossed it. Neither was it within hearing distance of ordinary conversation. But a cry of alarm would carry to it, and no vehicle could either reach the trysting place or return to the outer world without turning its angle.

Anne chose, however, to forego the mossy seat at the road's edge. Back from it was a little clearing, almost circular, where a fallen tree trunk with part of one unsevered upstanding branch afforded nearly as comfortable a resting place. Here she could see whatever passed, without herself being seen. The light, though, was too dim for reading, and it was that which caused her ordinarily to prefer the more exposed location. But to-day her book had been brought simply as a blind should occasion arise to present herself. Her mind was too filled with realities to find anything distracting in fiction.

The afternoon was excessively hot and almost breathless. Even here in the wood, usually cool, there was but little diminution of high temperature. The air seemed stagnant and the scents oppressive. A profound silence reigned, unbroken by so much as the twitter of a winged denizen. And Anne, sitting on her tree trunk, waited with straining

ears and a slowly growing impatience. It was not quite two when she sat down and now, on consulting her watch, she found it was nearly half past. She drew the conclusion that Woodward, eager as Julia, had been more than punctual, though she had failed to discover the fresh imprint of rubber-tyred wheels on the plastic loam of the road.

And then, while in the act of returning the watch to her waistband, there came faintly to her ears the murmur of a speeding motor. Suddenly tensed, her heart beats quickened to the nearing pulse of the engine, she peered from her place between the grey perpendicular boles. She expected only to see the car flash by. For from the direction of the sound, it was coming, not going, and it was shamefully late. It was a case, however, of "much haste less speed," and she was destined to a surprise. Woodward, miscalculating the narrowness of the road and the sharpness of the angle, caused his vehicle to leap the low rise of the opposite side, yet spared himself from serious disaster by a swift throwing on of brakes.

She saw that the forward wheels had thus become wedged between the stone on which Brinton had sat yesterday, while she made her confession, and an adjacent stump. The impact had flung him forward across the steering wheel, where, for just a moment, he hung limp. Then she heard him swear roundly, and saw him, a little clumsily and uncertainly, effect his release and stand down, and there was that in his utterance and his movement which was convincingly informatory. He had been drinking.

The discovery wrought in her a fresh uneasiness. She knew something of him when under the influence of alcohol, and the knowledge, in association with her interest in his present errand, filled her with misgiving. She was tempted, for a moment, to gain the summer house in advance of him and warn the waiting and enamoured girl of her peril. But she feared the insufficiency of her influence. She might only serve to make bad worse. On the other hand, might not the very fact of the man's semi-intoxication serve, unaided by her, to cause a revulsion in Julia's feeling for him?

In the end this latter hope prevailed. She kept to her place, unstirring, while he laboured, with much perspiring and considerable muttered profanity, to release the imprisoned car, nor left it when, eventually, he succeeded and drove off. But she keened her hearing the more acutely a minute or two later for any outcry, and even rose in readiness for haste should such alarm ensue.

Its absence, however, was only temporarily reassuring; and after waiting for a space which seemed endless she crossed the road, plunged into the thicket on its opposite side, and stole cautiously in the general direction of the glen, her virtuous resolve neither to spy nor to eavesdrop disregarded under the lash of the new and more pressing exigency. She came at length to where, twenty yards away, the scene of meeting was visible through a rift in the leafage of some young elders; and she paused there, peering.

Not a whisper reached her. They were still standing, just within the summer house, she leaning against him, and he with one arm about her waist. And he appeared to be talking hurriedly. If she might only hear what he was saying! In haste she glanced about her, hoping for an equally well-guarded but nearer vantage-point, and descried on a slightly lower level—on the very rim of the little clearing, in fact, just beyond where she had found the piece of torn letter—a screen of low silky willows. She gained it without a sound, and very quickly. But, already, the pair had changed their grouping. Julia was no longer within his embrace. She had evidently stepped back from him, and she was shaking her head in a not very decisive negative. And then Anne heard him say:

"But you must. How would next week or next month be any better? And what's the use of my seeing your father? Once we're married we'll send him a wire. And he'll wire us his bless-

ing, I'm not made of ice, nor even stone. I want you, kid! And I want you now."

"Oh, but not to-night," came Julia's protest. "Please just meet Daddy once. Mrs. Wharton will introduce you. I'll make her. She's so good. She'll do anything for me. And then, if—"

"Not on your life," he interrupted. "Now listen, little one. It's to-night, or never, with me. I've got to be back in New York by Sunday. That will give us a day in Boston alone together before I buckle down to the demnition grind again. Here's your chance. Take it or leave it. And there's no time to argue, for I've got to get back to Parmalee's and pack up. What is it to be?"

For a full half-minute, Julia stood speechless, fixing him with pleading, pathetic eyes.

"Give me till to-night," she begged. "I must think."

He joined her again, wrapping both arms around her, and drawing her close to him.

"You must care a lot for me," he told her, "not to know your mind yet. But, listen. I'll tell you what I'll do, but you must promise me something. I'll give you to midnight. At twelve sharp, I'll be waiting outside your front yard with the flivver. But two minutes will be my limit. Not a second more. If you're not there by 12.2 I'll be gone. Understand that? That will give you all of nine hours to think it over. But you've got to do the thinking without help. Give me your word that you'll not speak of it to a soul, and least of all to 'Mrs. Wharton,' as you call her; though it's no more hers than Sally Brown's yours. Do you agree? Quick, now! Yes, or no?"

Anne saw the girl nod her head, but the "yes" was so low and faint that it died before reaching her. Then there was a hurried, almost brutally violent and impassioned kiss from the man, and he was off without another word.

Julia moved to the door her eyes following him. When Anne could no longer see him, she noted a quick smile on the girl's face and saw her wave her hand. And a second later she heard the clutter of his "flivver's" exhaust. Then Julia turned back again, sat down, and resting her arm on the broken railing buried her face in the angle of her elbow.

CHAPTER X

ORDINARILY, the Brinton homestead was wrapped in somnolent silence and draped in inky darkness each night by eleven o'clock. But at quarter to twelve on the night of Julia's tryst and Anne's eavesdropping lights burned in two of the upper rooms and sleep was far away. There was, however, an evident effort on the part of the two occupants to reduce all sound to the minimum; and each, in spite of the oppressive heat which had carried over from the day into this much of the night, moved and was busy behind closely closed shutters and drawn curtains.

For nine hours each had wrestled with her own individual problem. With one it had been simply a choice of two alternatives—a yes or a no. But with the other it had been a more complex matter, involving a course of action to be followed should she ascertain that the girl's ultimate decision was the one which Woodward had so persistently urged.

Several plans had suggested themselves. It would have been a simple matter to inform David Brinton of what portended and thus shift the responsibility to his shoulders. But she questioned that that would be quite honourable. Moreover, while it would frustrate the elopement for the moment, it might only encourage future rebellion and eventual accomplishment. For she had no faith in the man's threat of desertion in the event of his present effort not succeeding.

It had occurred to her, as a safeguard, to turn Julia's clock back while she was at supper, but when she attempted to enter the room was balked by finding the door locked. A personal appeal in advance she had hardly considered, lest the very fact that she had stooped to spying might sway the girl

to take the step when already resolved otherwise. The idea of threatening her, or of, at the last moment, confronting her and holding her back by force declaring that she would arouse the house unless obeyed, was open to the same objection as making the facts known to her father.

What she wished—what she must do—was not merely to save Julia from her present peril, but from future danger from the same source, and, at the same time, if possible spare both her and that dear man whose daughter she was from the pain of mutual awareness. And to this end she had at length worked out a design, quixotic in inception and demanding the utmost tact and finesse in execution.

Not until after half past eleven had Anne's listening ear, pressed against the rose-trellis wallpaper, made certain, crushing thus her final lingering hope, that Julia's infatuation was not to be denied. Very distinctly, then, had she detected the all-too-evident preparations for departure, including the removal of belongings from drawers and closet and their hasty packing in a suitcase which creaked with each fresh accession. All uncertainty thus deplorably made clear she had at once set about her own somewhat similar employment, moving even more warily lest she in her turn should give warning of being on the alert.

Her packing was limited—a small handbag of alligator skin, in which she placed only a few toilet requisites—and involved but a brief moment. To dress, however, took more time. For she had been waiting in the furnace of that closed room in the scantiest of scant attire. And now, as she nervously, yet cautiously and with all possible haste, reclothed herself, a fear tore at her lest after all she might be too late.

At intervals, throughout the evening, there had echoed reverberant but distant thunder. In the midst of her dressing it had sounded again, louder and more prolonged. And, as she finished, even to the wrapping about her of a long black cloaklike garment, another peal told it her that the storm was working nearer. At the very last she unlocked one of the drawers of her bureau, and taking a revolver from it, dropped it into a pocket of her outer vestment.

With her light out, she halted still an instant to press her ear once more to the partitioning wall. Julia was moving with an even more restless activity in the face of the flying minutes and the imminence of the appointed hour. Sustained by this reassurance, Anne slipped from her room into the dim passage, and stole soundlessly down the shallow stairs to the black well of hall below, through which she groped her way to the door.

As she turned back the key she questioned whether or not to extract it and lock the door from the outside. The few seconds thus gained—for Julia, halted here, would either resort to the back door or climb through a window—might mean the difference between success and failure. But wiser counsel prevailed. She thought of morning, and the questioning that would be provoked by such a discovery.

She knew, as she crept through the pitch darkness down the flagged path to the gate, that she was fully five minutes ahead of time, and she began to speculate on the likelihood of Woodward anticipating the moment. In driving twenty miles from Parmalee's it was not reasonable to expect precise punctuality. A variance of five minutes either way was the preponderant probability. And she was banking on him being early. If late there would be two women waiting instead of one, and Julia's voice would guide him against mistake.

She passed the gate, pausing beside the lilac bush which spread beyond the paling at its left. So far as she could see there was no car there. Certainly no car with lights. But if he had extinguished his lights! In her caution she had opened and closed the gate without a sound, taking care even to muffle the click of its latch. And he might be depending on that click to signal the girl's coming.

She moved a few paces farther to the left, walking close to the edge of the roadway and straining her eyes. Then she coughed—forced a faint throat-clearing sound—but there was no response. At almost the same instant, though, the road for a single second was lighted up with the dazzling brilliance of a lightning flash. And she saw that it was empty.

Dismayed, Anne, in the deeper black that succeeded, crept back to her lilac bush, while the world about her seemed split asunder by a deafening crash of thunder. And, immediately following it, came a gust of wind, waking the night's relapse to stillness with a clamour of rustling leaves.

A minute—endless as time, yet brief as a dream—went by. The wind rose to a gale, and its roar in the trees above her was like that of an angry mammoth. All lesser sounds were drowned by it. The branches of the lilac bush lashed her from her refuge, to be buffeted by the unbroken tempest. She stood out in the open, her back to the hurricane which tore at her.

Then, for a second or two, not more, there was a slight cessation, a little lull; and from behind her, borne on the momentarily sobered wind, there reached her that longed-for throb of a speeding motor; and turning quickly, she caught the gleam of its lamps. But at the same instant, not by reason of any one of the five senses, but some infallible sixth, she was conscious that Julia was at the gate, fumbling nervously with its latch.

To keep her ample cloaklike wrap from being whipped to ribbons Anne had thrust her left hand through the handle of her satchel, carrying it thus on her wrist, and plunged that hand and her right as well into the low side pockets. Her percipience now was preternaturally acute, and her wits as sensitively alert. Her right hand was clutching the weapon her pocket held, and without hesitation, she drew it forth.

Then she wheeled. The lightning flash which at that crisis lifted dazzlingly the storm's veil revealed the two figures so nearly of a size pallidly facing one another across the gate's whitewashed palings. And it glinted fearsomely on the shining barrel of the lethal thing between them.

Anne caught the look of surprised and abashed terror in the girl's staring green eyes, and then all was black again. She was conscious that in another second or two the thunder would drown her voice, and she spoke quickly.

"Go back!" she commanded, her tone tense. "And say nothing. You see, dear, I can't let you elope with my own husband."

CHAPTER XI

BALLINGSBURG, which lies in the valley, sixteen miles to the east of Northborough, is the seat of the county and a city. Before its principal hotel—the Balling House—at something like half-past twelve on a summer night that was for years after to be recalled as the night of the big thunder storm, there alighted from a small automobile, without a top, and from which oozed water at every pore, a thoroughly soaked and very much bedraggled young man and young woman.

The young man, whose gait as he mounted the hotel steps, was noticeably unsteady, carried a suitcase that was water-stained and mud-spattered; and the young woman, whose long, saturated, black cloaklike wrap clung limply to her figure, bore in her hand a small travelling satchel. The brim of her black straw hat drooped so suddenly as to hide all of her face, excepting her mouth and chin.

With a gesture no more certain than his gait he indicated a chair in the entrance hall, and mumbled: "Wait there jus' a minute," as he himself turned into the office on the left. There, in a hand which gave every indication of being half palsied, he inscribed the names: "Mr. and Mrs. A. Ward, New York," on the hotel register, and demanded: "Room and bath. Bes' you got in house."

A coloured boy who had been drowsing in a chair near the desk awoke, rubbing his eyes, at the sudden cry of "Front!" and, having first lurched for the suit-case, reached out for the key which the clerk held in extended hand.

As they were turning away an afterthought occurred to the guest and he flung back: "See't my car's put in garage!"

On reaching the entrance hall, now unhampered by his luggage, "Mr. A. Ward, New York," approached the seated "Mrs. A. Ward," and with an: "It's all right m'dear," playfully tipped up her drooping hatbrim.

Half-muddled as he was from drink, he stood for a breath, uncertain, in a state of thoroughly dazed confusion, trying to reconcile the face of Anne Wharton on what he was confident was the body of Julia Brinton. And Anne, too, taken aback by this sudden and unexpected unmasking, was shaken by a cowering fear that here, at the last moment, the extraordinary bold and eccentric plan she had so hastily adopted was about to fall in ruin about her.

Up until now every circumstance had favoured her, the storm, on which she could not have counted when making her decision, most of all. For it had not only hidden her from recognition by sight, but it had made even tentative efforts at conversation during that frantic half-hour's drive in the teeth of its fury utterly impossible. And the fact of Woodward being in the condition he was, accepting the expected without so much as a shadow of suspicion, had proved a scarcely less potent ingredient.

She had known from the beginning though, that eventual recognition was not only inescapable but absolutely necessary to the fulfilment of her purpose. But she had hoped to delay it a little further, choosing her own time in the first moments of their privacy, and thus securing the advantage of initiative, to be able to achieve the ultimate victory, without which this whole temerarious endeavour must react disastrously upon herself, without the accomplishment of any good whatever.

How, in the tiny space of that breath, that heart-beat, of his apparent uncertainty, she found the power to command herself, was for ever to be beyond her own comprehension. She spoke no word, but merely lifted to him her eyes, in which she managed to make manifest such a convincing expression of complete and ardent surrender as to penetrate with sweetest flattery to the very centre of his befuddled consciousness.

"Well, for God's sa—!" he mumbled, the final word cut short by a fatuous chuckle, while his broad rubicund face glowed with gratified vanity.

The coloured bell boy had switched on the lights in the room to which he had conducted them, had thrown open the windows to the now cool and rain-washed night air, and was about to go, when Anne checked him.

"I don't suppose there are any writing materials in that desk over there, are there?"

The boy looked to see.

"I thought not," she said. "There never are. I wish you'd fetch some, at once."

When he was at the door again it was Woodward who detained him. "Bar closed?" he asked.

"Yessir!"

"Then bring some ice water." And when he had gone, her elated companion said to Anne: "Sorry can't get champagne t' celebrate this glorious 'casion. But got some good Scotch in suitcase." And, dropping his rain-soaked cap to the floor, he suddenly took her, wet-through as they both were, into his arms.

She closed her eyes, yet smiled, as she yielded her lips to his fœtid kisses.

"God!" he exclaimed with fervent gratification as he released her. "At last! Knew, though, it'd come to this some time."

"And—and you're not sorry? Not disappointed?"

"Do I look it?"

"No. I can't say you do. But—still—"

"Still what?"

"She's younger, you know, and—and very lovely."

"Hell!" he said. It was a growl of repudiation. You can't compare her—that kid—with yourself. You know you can't."

She was unbuttoning her wrap.

"Isn't it only," she went on, "that I'm welcome because you really had given up hope? Because you regarded me as unattainable?"

"I should say not." He had stripped himself of his grey alpaca dustcoat, and was now removing the thin blue serge that he had worn underneath it. She saw that his striped silk shirt was stained where the rain had soaked through the outer garments, carrying the dye with it.

Then, apparently, his vanity all at once required reassurance. "But, say!" he questioned, "Why did you do this?"

"Need you ask? Isn't it plain, Alan?"

"You mean you were jealous of her?"

"Of course. I have been from the first. This afternoon I knew she had gone to meet you, and I followed. I heard everything. And I—I couldn't let her steal my happiness."

"You might have had it long ago. You had first call. I don't just see why—"

"It wasn't until I saw you hold her in your arms—until I saw you kiss her, there in the summer house, that I realized what you meant to me. What I was about to miss, maybe for ever."

Thus encouraged, he was about to embrace her again, but a sharp rap on the door deterred him. It was the coloured boy with the stationery and the ice water. When the boy had departed finally the moment had passed. The embrace could wait. There was something he craved even more. He lifted his suitcase to a chair and, having unstrapped it, took out a bottle of Scotch whisky and busied himself with the mixing of two rather stiff highballs.

Anne, meanwhile, had been arranging on the desk-pad a sheet of paper and an envelope, and taking the stopper from the small ink bottle. In her hand she held a penholder with a new pen.

"What's the idea?" he asked, as he crossed to her, a glass in each hand. "What's all the hurry? Why not take off your hat and coat an' make yourself at home?"

"Because," she answered, "there's something to be done first. Something that I want you to do, dear."

"Me?" and he laughed. "What? Give you my autograph?"

"No," she rejoined, smiling. "I want you to write to Julia Brinton."

"Oh, come!" he demurred. "What for?" And then, not waiting for an answer, he pressed the highball upon her, with: "Drink that, and behave."

She took the glass in her left hand, still holding the pen in her right. "I don't really want it," she told him. "But if I drink it, for you, to our happiness, you'll do as I ask, darling, won't you?"

"'S'nothing I wouldn't do for you, sweetheart," he agreed.

Then they touched glasses and drank.

"That's funny," he said when he had drained his. "Told that child only yesterday you were jealous of her. See, how I knew all the time."

"Of course I was. That's why before I am quite yours I want to make sure that you're done with her for ever."

"Oh, I see. Well, that's easy."

"But don't hurt her more than you can help. I insist on that, Alan. May I dictate the letter? I'd like to."

She gave him the pen and took his glass from him, placing it beside her own on the upper ledge of the desk.

"Sure thing," he agreed, as he sat down. "Go as far as you like." And as slowly she furnished the words he spread them with still tremulous, uncertain hand over the sheet of hotel letter paper before him.

When it was finished they read it over together as she leant above him:

"My Dear Julia,—*In the end I couldn't. I'm not a saint by any means,*

but you are too fine a girl to have your life ruined by the deception of such a scoundrel as I planned to be. I have never really loved you. It was only the baser in me that craved you. I couldn't marry you, because I already have a wife. Forgive me, because I'm not worthy of remembrance.

Sincerely,
ALAN WOODWARD.

She took it up, then, and began folding it, as she said: "Now address the envelope, that's a good fellow."

In blotting it he smudged the ink, but she did not ask him to address another. She inserted the letter and stuck down the flap.

"Now," she said, moving towards the door, "I'm going to post it."

But he got to his feet with a celerity of which she hardly believed him capable, blocking her way.

"You are not!" he cried roughly. "Not by a damn sight. I'll ring for the boy if it's so important. You stay here, milady! And don't forget it."

"But why not?" she asked in a voice disarmingly calm and yet surprised. "What harm is there in my going downstairs to drop it in the box? I want to be satisfied that it is surely sent. I'll be back in half a minute."

"You'll not go," he repeated. "Very clever game, but not clever enough. See it all now. Might have known you were keeping hat and cloak on for some reason." He glanced quickly about the room. "Of course! That proves it. Even left your satchel downstairs. Hid it, I suppose. Give me that letter!" As he spoke he was backing towards the door, and she felt that he was about to lock it.

She had thrust the letter into her pocket at his first words. Now, her hand refollowed it, as she said:

"Are you crazy? My satchel's in the closet. Look and see. And, of course, you may have the letter, if you—Why on earth should I steal away from you? Didn't I come with you unbidden? Haven't I proved to you that I love you? That I want you? Oh, Alan, how terribly cruel you are!"

For just a second he faltered as she drew nearer, fumbling apparently for the letter. Before he recovered himself she had covered him with her revolver.

Her heart pounded stiflingly, knowing the bluff she was making and her imminent peril of having it called. For not a single chamber of the revolver was loaded. Yet outwardly she was marvellously composed, holding him with a fixed gaze which was compounded of unwavering courage and determination.

Swiftly and surely, with one combined motion, she possessed herself of the door-key and turned the knob. There was an instant then in which it seemed to her that, after all, she was about to fail. His face had purpled; his eyes were shot with the blood and fire of a wild, reckless rage. In that instant she saw herself pounced upon, thrown back, overpowered, imprisoned. And, impelled by something more electric than thought, her wrist flexed, snapped back, and the weapon she had been pointing, propelled as by a steel spring, leaped the short space between them, to strike the enemy squarely in the face.

Another second, and with the door locked behind her, she was flying down the single flight of stairs. From beneath the chair she had sat on in the hall she recovered her satchel. The door to the porch stood open. Through it, spurred now not so much by fear of pursuit as by a passionate elation, she hastened out into the balmy, star-lit night.

CHAPTER XII

NORTHBOROUGH, which was apparently in the vortex of the thunder storm, had suffered from its might. Three houses had been struck by lightning and more or less damaged and a barn had been burned to the ground. One of the houses was that of David Brinton. Its kitchen chimney had been demolished and a great gaping hole torn through kitchen roof and floor. And the fact that one of the inmates—

the boarder—had slept soundly through the ear-splitting violence of this electrical bombing was regarded by both David and Alma as amazing. From David's viewpoint, it was amazingly gratifying, for he saw in it but an added evidence of perfectly regained nervous poise. But to his sister-in-law, still jealous and suspicious, it was amazingly incredible. For, apart from the tumult of the storm and that one supreme rending crash, there had been prolonged talking in the upper hall just outside Julia's door, which was within a yard or two of Mrs. Wharton's. And then, too, there had been Julia's screaming. For the poor child had been wildly hysterical because of the storm.

So affected, indeed, was she that she had not come down to breakfast, and her father, who had gone up to see her, reported her feverish, with an aching head, and had telephoned for Dr. Morly.

Mrs. Wharton, unusually silent throughout the meal and self-absorbed, had asked solicitously if there was anything she could do, but as Alma carefully noted, had not this time volunteered to seek the child unbidden.

At dinner, from which Julia was again absent, Anne, having in a measure recovered her self-command, was less distrait. She began to talk at once, speaking of the apparent interest of the whole village in the damaged kitchen and the wrecked chimney, if she might judge from the number of visitors she had noticed about the grounds. But it struck her that both Mr. Brinton and Miss Fielder were strangely unresponsive. It had become their turn for the indulgence of a thoughtful taciturnity; and her first thought was that Julia was really, and perhaps seriously ill. But in answer to her enquiry her host said:

"Dr. Morly promises us she'll be herself again in a few days. Just nervous shock and disturbed digestion. It's nothing to worry over."

Robbed of this explanation, Anne was quick to assume another. Was it possible, she asked herself, that the girl, feverish, a little delirious, perhaps, had let fall some hint of her secret, and that, persistently questioned, she had made a clean breast of the unfortunate romance and, in her bitterness, involved in it her would-be benefactress?

Anne had little doubt that Julia had recognized her in that lightning flare at the gate, when she had claimed Alan Woodward as a husband and had sent her back to the house and hysterics at the point of a revolver. She had lied, of course, for the very best possible purpose. But how could Julia, or those in whom she confided, know that? Nor, how, indeed, could she herself, ever convince them?

Tortured by this possibility, for she was very jealous of the confidence shown her by Brinton in the acceptation of her tragic story, her appetite fled her, and in a little while she excused herself and left the table. As she came to Julia's door she was half-tempted to enter, uninvited. But decided at once that, all things considered, she could gain nothing by it. She went into her own room and sat down to think. Very shortly, though, the four walls became oppressive. The very house, itself—the house now of enemies, she felt—was unbearable. She rose, put on her hat, took up a book as usual, and her sunshade, and went hurriedly out.

The afternoon after the storm of the night was glorious. The sun shone brightly from a sky almost wholly cloudless, and the air, though balmy, had a snap in it. Yesterday it had been dead, smothering. To-day it was alive. Her spirits rose in response to it, and the wood, which she soon entered, calmed and soothed her; taking away half her depression and awakening a fresh optimism.

David Brinton, watching from his study window, had seen her go out, and, noting the book, had divined her objective. To him, too, the walls of the room, and the house of which those walls were a part, had grown oppressive. Doubt, questioning, suspicion, tittle-tattle, had stolen away the peace

that he loved. He was wrapped about, it seemed to him, in a mesh of misunderstanding and cross-purposes.

He waited just a little while, and went out. And, at a distance, he followed his boarder.

Between breakfast and dinner, that day, he had heard enough to shake the faith of the most wilfully prejudiced. For the visitors of which Mrs. Wharton had spoken were not all drawn by so innocuous an attraction as simple curiosity to witness the damage wrought by the lightning. More than one of them—four, at least—had been impelled by a passion to divulge and to enquire, not about the lightning, but concerning a matter of far more intriguing interest. All four of them had seen the Brinton guest, palpably bedraggled and apparently worn and weary, returning at dawn with a small travelling satchel in hand, and evidently from a journey. Three of them, whose knowledge had been gained merely from witnessing her pass their homes, he might have satisfied with some harmless invention, had it not been that they'd probably already spoken to Alma, or would, he knew, subsequently apply to her for confirmation. But the fourth, who was no less already interested a person than old Simon Scudder, had not only seen her, but talked with her.

Called to Ballingsburg by the illness of a married granddaughter, the day before, he had been to the necessity of taking the early train back to Northborough in order to keep an engagement with a prospective purchaser for some of his farm lands. And Mrs. Wharton had approached him, with an enquiry as to trains, on the Ballingsburg station platform, the ticket office not being open at that hour.

He had been too much of a gentleman, he explained to David, to question her, but there was no denying that she had aroused his curiosity, and he asked his old friend flatly what she was doing there. To which Brinton had non-committally replied that he supposed she had a perfectly good reason, such as Simon had, but that he was not in her confidence. Whereupon the old man had taken from his pocket a newspaper—a late "extra" issued by the Ballingsburg *Daily News*—and called his attention to certain startling headlines. These and the article beneath them David had indignantly repudiated at once as having any possible connection with Mrs. Wharton.

The implication angered him. But, later, having walked down to the village with Scudder in order to get his mail, he had found in his box a letter for Julia—the address in a masculine hand, somewhat smudged—bearing the Ballingsburg postmark. And the fact that the envelope bore, too, the imprint of the Balling House, mentioned in the newspaper story, seemed to link it in some perplexing sinister fashion with the other disclosures. And, all at once, the possibility of his daughter's indisposition—such an unusual thing for her—being even remotely connected with the affair filled him with an intense sense of uneasiness, if not, indeed, with alarm. Had her condition not been what it was, he would have taken the letter to her immediately and demanded to see the enclosure. As it was, he had put it in his pocket, where it still remained.

Anne, relieved in a measure and in complete ignorance of all that had been happening, was rarely more surprised than she was by the abrupt appearance of her host. Seated on her favourite mossy hummock at the foot of her great tree, she had been deep in reverie, believing her solitude, under the circumstances, more than ever unlikely to be invaded. Nor was there ever an occasion when David Brinton's coming could have been less welcome. She was oppressed and made ill-at-ease by an accusing consciousness of deception; and the fact that she regarded it as obligatory did not serve to lighten it.

She saw at once that he was disturbed, like herself; deeply concerned, serious, unhappy. And directly her heart went out to him. Again she was prone to attribute this to Julia's ma-

laise. But his very first words, as he sat down beside her, proved her mistake.

"I've been wondering, my dear lady," he said, not looking at her, "whether you'd mind another real heart-to-heart talk"

Her first impulse was to escape. She was in no mood for cross-questioning, and certainly not for confession. All day she had been, up to the last ten minutes or so, at high nervous tension: and she felt that to put on exhibition all that she longed only to hide and forget would strain those already taut nerves to breaking. If only he had given her time! Still, it was evident that he had learned a little, and it was only natural that he should be impatient to have his doubts settled. And the thought that he was not a man to accept hearsay—the very fact that he had evidently come to her, confident of gaining the truth—swayed her towards yielding. Noting her hesitation he had gone on:

"I think you know how much I believe in you, and how intolerant I am of small-town gossip. But there's something now that touches me—or threatens to—very closely, and I'm hoping that you may and will dissipate it."

She saw then that the ordeal was not to be eluded, and she breathed in her soul a little prayer for strength.

"I'm afraid," she began in a low voice, and a tone that conveyed contrition, "that I've sacrificed my right to be believed."

She paused, hoping for his protest; for his denial. But he was silent, and she added: "I intentionally let you assume something that was not the truth."

Strangely enough he was caught by this back to that first real interview in which she had so vividly, yet with such broad, sweeping strokes, pictured for him her marital tragedy. She had not, he recalled, actually claimed to be guiltless; but he had inferred it, as she evidently meant him to do. And when, now, she said: "I didn't sleep through the storm last night. I was not in my room from the first to the last of it," he took it as, not her original admission, but as an added instance of her failure in complete candour.

But it was the more immediate matter that he had come there to speak of, and so, ignoring the other, he said to her:

"I am told you were in Ballingsburg. Is that true?"

"Yes," she answered, nodding her head. "I had to go. And I wanted to keep it a secret. My—my errand I can't—I'm so sorry, Mr. Brinton, but I can't tell that even to you."

"It would be safe with me," he suggested, still not looking at her.

"I know that. I'm sure of it. But—please don't ask me to explain."

"I must ask you one question, Mrs. Wharton. And I've a right to have it answered. Is the reason you can't tell me because it involves my daughter, Julia?"

And Anne, embarrassed, fixed on the horns of this unlooked-for dilemma, sat staring at the boulder across the road, than which she was no less dumb.

Brinton's hand was digging into his coat-pocket. He felt that his vision was clearing in a measure, and that the letter his fingers touched might speed it. When he had drawn it forth and was holding it out to her, exposing the superscription, the hotel imprint and the postmark, he said:

"Possibly you know something of this."

She couldn't see that it remained unopened, and believed that he had already read the words of her own dictation. She had a feeling of being engulfed, and doubted the efficacy of even the truth to save her. It might be worth trying. It was a duty to herself, she supposed, to try it; and a duty to him who had trusted her. But all at once, when about to speak, she discovered that she was oddly bereft of words.

And then she heard Brinton going on:

"I understand that something sensa-

tional occurred at the Balling House, last night. A guest lost his life there."

At the last words a tremor shook her from head to foot, as though the engulfing waters had chilled her, in that instant, to the marrow. She started, sitting straight, her throat constricted, which caused her to gasp audibly for breath. And David, watching her, added:

"A young man named Woodward. Alan Woodward." Nor, yet satisfied, he continued: "A New York newspaper man who, until yesterday, had been at Parmalee's for the fishing."

He saw her quick pallor, noted the flicker of her eyelids, and his arms were there to receive her as she crumpled, slipping from her mossy hummock and dropping inertly towards him.

CHAPTER XIII

Anne Wharton was not the sort of woman that faints at the drop of a hat. For more than twenty-four hours she had been under an almost continuous and most unusual nervous strain. She had taken at least one enormous risk. Once already in her life she had been accused of murder. Last night, in self-defence, but with no witnesses, she had attacked another man; fleeing without waiting to learn how greatly or how little he had been hurt. And now, at a moment when she had no reason to expect any tidings one way or the other, she had been told that he was dead.

To David Brinton this culmination of his probing was in more ways than one a painfully harrowing experience. In the brief space that she had been a member of his household he had come to regard her with an ever-growing respect and admiration. He believed her, as he had again and again phrased it to himself, to be "a woman who has suffered and is good, and so bears the stamp celestial." And even now, in spite of all that this emotional collapse so plainly and horridly indicated; in spite of the confession of it—as convincing in its emphasis of silence as spoken words, if not indeed more so—he was for her all pity, which is akin to love, and charity, which is love itself; and only of himself reproachful.

Resilient even beyond his hopes she came back presently, to find herself lying flat on the sward, with Brinton bending over her and bathing her face and temples with a handkerchief which he had wet in the brook. And seeing then only kindliness, with possibly a little of something more, in his steel-grey eyes, she permitted herself a faintly eager longing for, if not hope of, reassurance.

It may have been that he divined this. He had a way of putting himself, as it were, into another's skin, and looking at the world and events through their eyes. For when, at length, she sat up and smiled, he said:

"I should have known better than to give you that news as I did. For I judged he might be the friend who called on you day before yesterday. It seems he fell out of a window."

What else he had read in that newspaper account he wouldn't have told her then for worlds. It's a question whether he would ever have told her, had it not been that, almost immediately, she began telling him the whole story and continued it to the very last word. For the relief of knowing that the flung revolver had inflicted no fatal injury reacted so stimulatingly, physically as well as morally, that weariness dropped from her and she was inspired to a succinct and expressive mental unburdening. Nor was she deterred now by any necessity of keeping faith with Julia, seeing that she still believed the letter shown her had been opened and read, and that her hearer was already in possession of at least the more salient facts of the girl's infatuation.

She began with her own first meeting with Alan Woodward in the prison at Nashville, where he had come to interview her. She spoke of his brilliancy as a correspondent and especially of his kindness to her at that time, by giving her the first sympathetically favour-

able news story that had appeared. She had later to learn that he was a dipsomaniac. Charming when sober, he was a fiend when drunk. Following the trial he had made violent love to her, and fearing openly to offend him, she had, while not seeming to resent his ardour, stolen away North, leaving him no address. In New York, quite by accident, she learned that he was married, though he had posed to her as a bachelor. It was as much through fear of meeting him again, as for any other reason, that she had sought isolation for the present summer.

"Oh, why was it," she cried with drawn brow and earnest eye, "that he, too, should have drifted here, of all places in the world?"

But David hazarded no answer. Later he quoted Watts to himself concerning the mystery of Divine performance, and argued that it was for the salvation of his daughter and the revelation and establishment of all that was best in his boarder's character.

The part of her narrative that had to do with Julia's meeting with Woodward she glozed over, and of that bit of a letter found near the summer-house she said nothing at all. If she might only be sure that it meant less than it signified! But while all she knew of the girl argued in favour of her hope and desire, Alan Woodward's course at Ballingsburg, while believing it was Julia, and not she, who was his companion, bore too strongly against it to be ignored. And this, too, she felt, could hardly have escaped the father, had she not, in her recital, made it appear that discovery of her deception came in the car before the hotel was reached.

Herself she spared in no way. And Brinton, with the preknowledge of the newspaper account, which had been reasonably full, realized it. He was able, thus enlightened, to arrive at what seemed to him the only plausible theory of the man's death. Enraged over being tricked, and his mind muddled by drink, he had evidently sought by means of the window to reach the ground outside the hotel and so head off his fleeing deceiver and assailant, and had either miscalculated the drop, or, owing to his condition, had overestimated his agility.

Put thus in possession of all the facts, more confident than ever though he was of the sterling worth of this unfortunate woman's character — and this, too, in spite of that assumption of her admission of not entire freedom from guilt in the Nashville case—and filled with so fervid a gratitude for her service to Julia that no words could express it, he was nevertheless aghast concerning the consequences which, as he viewed the situation, appeared to be unescapable. The death of Alan Woodward under such sensational circumstances made it incumbent upon the law to find and produce, at least as a witness, the woman whom, but fifteen or twenty minutes before it occurred, he had registered under an assumed name as his wife: the woman who had so mysteriously disappeared, presumably at the very moment of the tragedy.

Had she been able to return to Northborough unseen and unrecognized, all might have been well. But, rather than to arouse question at that hour by applying at a garage for an automobile, she had for three hours walked the town's silent streets, sitting now and then on doorsteps to rest, and had gone finally to the railroad station, more than half an hour before train time, where she had spoken to and been recognized by a Northborough man, and that Simon Scudder, of all persons in the world.

No, there was no hope. Her identification and apprehension were inevitable.

It was nearly supper time when they reached home, coming in by the back way as they had on that other day of confession, and at the kitchen door Alma Fielder stood waiting.

"Mrs. Wharton," she said icily, speaking through lips tightly-drawn against her teeth, yet with an accent of sardonic satisfaction, "there's a man on the veranda to see you. He's been waiting two hours and more."

Brinton started to follow her, but Alma caught at his sleeve.

"You wait here," she whispered. "It's an officer from Ballingsburg. He's got a warrant for her arrest."

But David went just the same.

CHAPTER XIV

It was not until three months had gone by that Brinton was fully able to reach a clear perspective. In all the intervening weeks there had been so much shifting of values; so many changes of colour; such constant interposition of lights and shadows; that he had found it impossible to achieve a broad yet just perception of the rather complex projection.

Many times he had gone over it all, bit by bit, though picking the bits at random. But on this early October afternoon he had begun at the beginning, with that first letter in answer to the advertisement, and his interpretation of it. And he saw now how wonderfully right he had been, even beyond what at the time he had been willing to admit. For the signification of the looped and tied *o* and *a* had been borne out eventually to a remarkable degree. Secretiveness *had* been carried to the extreme. To gain a desired end, if Mrs. Wharton had not resorted to actual falsehood under oath, she had certainly confined herself to much less than the "whole truth." Yet it was no matter for reprobation. On the contrary, since the omission harmed no one and spared the blameless, he had to regard it as commendable. Moreover, it demonstrated in itself the accuracy of other points in his graphological reading: her broadmindedness, her fine sense of justice, and her infinite tact.

How she had astonished him that day when the officer who had been waiting more than two hours for her told her that she was wanted at Ballingsburg and must go back with him at once in his car! David had feared another collapse. But she had been composure itself. She had gone a little pale, it is true. Any woman would. The majority would probably have become hysterical. But Anne Wharton had said simply:

"If I'm likely to be detained there over night I'd probably best get my bag."

And David, himself, had said: "Can I get what you want? I'm going with you, you know."

It had developed then that she was not really under arrest. There was no charge against her. But she was wanted as a material witness at the inquest which was to be held that evening. Only once, though, and that for not over two minutes, was he given opportunity to speak to her in private, and then it was she that did most of the speaking. All the way from Northborough he had been tortured by the thought of what portended: the exposure which must strip from her her last shred of character and in all probability involve his daughter, as well—his motherless baby to whom he was so singly and devotedly attached, and of whom he had never before had reason to be otherwise than proud. And in that brief moment of privacy following their arrival he was made aware that his distress had been more evident to his companion than he, imagining her so deeply self-engrossed, had any reason to suspect.

He recalled now, after these months, the eager and sustaining grip of her hand, chilled though it was by nerves at tension, as she said, looking up at him with the bravest smile he had ever seen: "Oh, don't! Please don't worry! There's no reason. Just trust me. I swear to you I won't fail you."

And she hadn't. He had wanted to use what little influence he had with one of the county officials, who was an old friend, but she had begged him not to. It would only argue weakness, she held. Better to go through with it unaided. He must remember that she had had more personal experience with the law than had he.

Listening to her testimony, so convincingly given, he was amazed at his having entertained so hideous an anxiety. She had known the deceased,

she said, for two years and more. He had been of service to her in getting articles to her interest in the newspaper with which he was connected. A fortnight ago she had written him at Parmalee's to come to see her. He had come on the morning of the day preceding his accident. But they had been interrupted. Last evening he had stopped at the gate to tell her that he was going away, and she had insisted on getting in his car with him in order to finish their conversation. They had become interested and he had missed his train at the Junction. They had driven about until midnight when the storm overtook them, and they had made for Ballingsburg and the Balling House for shelter. As there was a letter in connection with the matter which she wished to dictate, he had proposed getting a room there for her, as it was too late for her to go back to Northborough. He intended, himself, to take the train for Boston which passed through Ballingsburg at about one o'clock. Not until this evening, here in the coroner's court, had she been aware that he had registered in the way he had. But he had been drinking, she knew that, and after the letter had been dictated, he had become so grossly ardent that he had frightened her. When he attempted to restrain her at the point of a revolver from leaving the room, and was about to lock the door, he stumbled, half lost his balance, and dropped his weapon. In that instant she fled, pausing an instant only, to make him a prisoner.

There had been some little cross-examination, but it touched nothing vital. The elderly district attorney had asked concerning the subject of the conversation and the dictated letter, and her reply had been: "A private business matter." He had not pressed the enquiry further. He had asked also concerning a bruise and abrasion on Woodward's brow: whether she knew how he had got it. She answered that she had not seen it, and it was taken for granted that it had been inflicted in his fall.

Brinton saw now, in this fresh review of her evidence, that she had more than evaded, more than equivocated. She had invented and boldly misrepresented the facts. She had lied. She had perjured herself. Perjured herself like a lady—like the true woman she was: the true woman he had always found her.

And there came back to him, then, that other question: Had she perjured herself in the same way at Nashville to save herself? Had she, or had she not, poisoned her brute of a husband? And believing from what he had understood her to say that last afternoon in the solitude of the wood road that she had, he was ready to justify in that as he had already justified in this other.

Juries of men, apparently, were always ready to absolve her. The Ballingsburg jury had followed in the footsteps of the Tennessee jury, and had decreed that Alan Woodward came to his death by accidentally falling from a window. But women are less easily swayed, or, to use their own phrasing: "less easily imposed upon." And Alma Fielder disagreed with the Ballingsburg jury. In the beginning she had held that Mrs. Wharton was mysterious. Now she was convinced that Mrs. Wharton was wicked. She had heard more than enough in the village, she declared, to warrant her. And it had come at length to that question which, at the beginning of August, she had put to her brother-in-law:

"Which do you need most, that woman or me? For either she goes or I do."

David had refused a direct answer. He needed them both, he said. Julia's illness, growing out of what was thought at first to be but a temporary indisposition, had been prolonged. And Anne Wharton had nursed her like an angel, and at this time was still nursing her. It was unthinkable that he could send the boarder away. And not only for this reason, which he could tell Alma, but even more so for those other reasons which he could not. So Miss Fielder, leaving not so much as a rag

behind her, deserted him in the hour of his necessity, and migrated to Block Island, where her brother's family were occupying a cottage for the summer.

Now, Julia, fully restored to health, her romantic experience, which had ended so tragically, no more than one of the horrid dreams of her delirium, had gone back to school, and Mrs. Wharton, having by gradual initiation slipped into Alma's deserted place in the domestic machinery, had moved into the smaller, warmer room over the kitchen and made ready to stop through the winter rather than leave this lone man unlooked after. And in spite of her good will she had only brought down upon herself and him a fresh avalanche of village opprobrium.

Something that Simon Scudder had said gave Brinton the first hint of it, and to Anne it was made abruptly apparent by the departure of the maid, Emily, who observed in going that she didn't want to question "but what everything was right and proper, but people will talk, you know, Miss Wharton," and as she'd always been a good girl and a churchgoer, it was better, she guessed, to leave.

This, too, had a part in David Brinton's general retrospective survey that October afternoon. In that brief period of pallor which precedes the dusk, seated at his study table, he had just seen the boarder pass in along the leaf-strewn flagged walk, and involuntarily his fingers released the pen he had been unconsciously holding through his reverie, and he slid back in his chair to a posture of idle relaxation.

"The boarder!" Everyone called her that. And yet it was preposterous. She was no more a boarder now than Alma had been. He had hardly realized it, but she was his housekeeper. He was dependent on her. For a week now, since Emily's going, she had been doing everything. She had tried to get another servant, but had so far been unsuccessful. So that all the housework had been added to her other voluntarily undertaken duties. He couldn't pay her. He knew that. She was not the sort to accept money. Why, now he came to think of it, she must be using what she had formerly given to Alma to help keep the place going. That mustn't go on, of course. He hardly knew what to do. It was a very delicate situation and it made the other—that of her anomalous position which had set the village talking—doubly embarrassing.

There came to him a suggestion of closing the house and going to the city. But he couldn't work there. He never had been able to work with the turmoil of the metropolis about him. And at the thought of parting from her—ending this association, which had become so much of late to him—a pain, poignant as that of a pricked nerve, shot through his heart.

His train of thought took a new turn. Wrapped in the silence of the old house of which he seemed so inextricably a part his meditation continued, while the pale twilight deepened to dusk, and the dusk merged into dark.

Anne, bringing in his lamp, found him sitting with closed eyes. She fancied he was asleep, and having put the lamp down was about to go out softly when, suddenly, he sat up and wheeled about in his revolving chair.

"Do you mind," he asked, "waiting just a moment? I've been thinking, and I find I owe you an apology."

She smiled, and it occurred to him that to be bereft of her smiles would be like being bereft of the sunlight.

"Owe me an apology?" she questioned. "I don't see what for."

"For that," he said, pointing to the lamp. "And a hundred things like it. For calmly accepting all this service of yours—this drudgery and giving only thanks in return. I can't understand myself. It's been unpardonable. And—and the animadversion as well," he added.

A hurt look came into her deeply blue eyes.

"Oh, Mr. Brinton!" she came back. "If you only knew what it has meant to me! This—this exercise of service. To be of some use again; to live, really. And to be appreciated."

He rose and stood leaning against his desk. It was very hard for him to say what he was going to, but he had made up his mind and it must be gone through with.

"I—I rather expected that," he told her. "I knew pretty well how you'd try to shift the obligation to yourself. But, you must see, my dear lady, that I can't, with self-respect, accept it, no matter how willing you are to give. And so, as there appears no other practicable way out, I've determined to close the house for the winter and find a home elsewhere."

For what happened then he was unprepared. He had come to regard her of late as possessed of such indomitable courage and such superb fortitude that he had pictured her accepting his decision with far more calm equanimity that he had been capable of in announcing it. But the hurt look had suddenly become one of acute mental suffering, and before he quite realized what this foreboded, Anne Wharton had crumpled on to the sofa behind her, and, covering her face with her hands, had given way to a violence of tears.

Following this, when she had regained sufficient composure to trust her voice and found him sitting, much distressed, beside her, she had chosen to confound him by shifting the blame, as she had the obligation, from his shoulders to her own. It was her coming that had been responsible for all his present trouble, ending now in the disruption of his home. She had tried to make what amends she could, but had succeeded only in making bad worse.

Brinton, cheered more than he would admit even to himself by this contention, for he saw in it the possibility of a less rigorous adjustment of his difficulty, nevertheless combated it; finally suggested that Mrs. Wharton would probably be far happier with kinsfolk and friends in urban surroundings, where there was more opportunity for diversion and less ignorant censoriousness.

"I can't have you sacrifice yourself just for me," he concluded. "I refuse to be so ungratefully selfish.

But, with that, she turned to him, laying a pleading hand on his arm, and lifting earnestly beseeching eyes to his.

"Listen," she begged. "Oh, please listen and believe me! I haven't any near kin in the world I haven't a single old friend that didn't turn on me in my trouble. Everyone of them believed, in spite of the verdict, that I killed Jonas Winchester. There were a few who said I was justified, that they didn't blame me, but that nothing could convince them that I didn't give him the poison. Do you think that I could ever again take the hand of anyone who, knowing all the facts, as I myself had sworn to them—I had admitted that I had prayed that he might die; had admitted, too, that I had forgotten that once to lock up the arsenic—could still think me capable of that awful crime? Oh, God no!"

She paused just an instant, her hand unmoving from his arm, her gaze still holding his, and went on: "Is it any wonder I want to stay here with you, who, knowing far less of me, never until this minute knowing exactly what happened, had faith in me? Is it any wonder that I love—"

The suddenness of his embrace cut her question unfinished.

"How much, my dear? How much?" he asked, his utterance choked by the swelling tide of emotion precipitately loosed. "Enough to marry me, and silence these evil tongues?"

"More, more than that," she told him. "Enough to worship you like an idol that can give nothing in return."

Not until after they were husband and wife did she make to him her final confession. He was teasing her for having told him that she loved him before he had had a chance to tell her that he loved her.

"But I didn't," she denied. "You only thought I was going to. You didn't let me finish. What I had begun to say was: 'Is it any wonder that I love to do for you?'"

A BAD NIGHT

By Richard Fisguill

MR. BUFORD'S formula was to start out on his left side, lay there till his left arm felt numb, and then very carefully turn to the right side, pausing for just an instant on his back to stretch his legs, clasp his hands and murmur four lines he had learned from an old negro woman when he was a child.

He had always gone to sleep that way.

Sometimes the ritual had to be repeated. If he were in physical pain, for instance, or suffering mental anguish. But in all his life he couldn't recall one single time that sleep had absolutely refused to lie with him.

That is, not before to-night.

So Mr. Buford wondered what was the matter. He had benumbed his left arm a dozen or more times, turned over through his coloured prayer to the regulation right side, and yet there he was with his eyes propped wide open. Then all sorts of uncomfortable sensations were pecking at him on the inside, gnawing, boring, like things trying to make their way out. He was an old man.

Lifting up on his elbow he looked over at his wife, who lay perfectly still in the other twin bed. She was a young woman.

He could just make out her features. At first he thought her eyes were shut. But leaning closer, he peered. He saw her heaviest eyelid come down, go up and then stay.

"What are you thinking about?" And he dropped back wearily on his bed.

"Nothing."

"If you weren't thinking about anything you'd either go to sleep or get restless. Look at me. Here I've been rolling and tossing—"

"It's the moon. I told you those big casement windows would keep us awake."

"Hm."

"You know what I mean. If we had just ordinary windows we could push up the top sash, pull the shades down, something. But with all your big glass door windows wide open— The moon, the flies, all those stars. Then bats. There are two of them out there. Great big bats. And when bats get in a woman's hair they have to be cut out. That's what Marie says. And she's going to leave next month."

"But I'll get up and shut the windows—"

"Don't. We'd smother. It's still enough up here on the top of this mountain without your making things still deader. I told you—"

"But this evening what d'you call off your reception for? God knows *I* don't want you to keep still and smother."

"Yes, you do."

"Now, Vangy!"

"But you knew when you built this old house up here—"

"No, I didn't. I thought we were going to be happy. I thought people had more sense. That down here at least folks were like what they used to be when I was a boy. That they weren't like New York. But they're worse. They are, really. Instead of their being grateful to me for dumping a million dollars among them— Instead of their—"

"Worshipping us."

"Us?"

"Well, you then." And her tone sounded spiteful. "Instead of their worshipping you."

"I never asked but one person in all this world to worship me."

"Let's go to sleep."

"No, I don't want them to worship me. But after I pay off the mortgages on their churches, help all their banks out, found a chair at their university, and wring the hand of every Tom, Dick and Harry that comes up here, invite them to dinner, show them everything, pictures, statuary, incunabula, give them an idea of what civilization means, and—"

"Awe them."

"Well, oughtn't they to be awed? They don't know anything, haven't seen anything, haven't done anything. And never will. They just sit around and talk. They've stopped chewing tobacco, but their talk's worse. And of all the empty pretensions! They make fun of me to my face. I'm not anything. I'm a mere rich man. Of course I have pretty things. Masterpieces. Of course my wife's young and pretty. Of course—" A gulp finally bored its way out of Mr. Buford.

"Of course, what? Speak it out. Then maybe you'll go to sleep."

"Speak what out?"

"Oh, I don't know. That, of course, your pretty young wife's wretched all the time and thinking about handsome young fellows who haven't seen anything, don't know anything, and never will do anything."

"Evangeline!"

"But that's what you mean. Why not say it! Then maybe you'll go to sleep."

"But I don't mean that."

"Then how'll this do: That of course because a young fellow is good-looking he thinks he ought to be matched off with your pretty young wife. Like that Apollo down there in the hall with the Venus which looks so much like me. Will that make you any easier? You feel like going to sleep now?"

"Vangy, I hope you'll never get to be an old woman. Or if you do, I hope you'll just forget. It would bother me to think you were suffering after you'd got to be old."

"But it doesn't matter now while I'm young, does it, dear?"

"Let's go to sleep."

"No," she objected. "There's one more thing. You can't go to sleep until you speak it all out. I know you. You're like a child. Old people always are. You have to whimper everything out with your head on my knees. I have to pat your head. Then you smile and go to sleep. So whimper a little about that handsome young professor of astronomy with violet eyes. And then we'll both go to sleep. I'm your wife. It's my business to hear you whine. So whimper a little, dear. Then I'll pat you on the head. And we'll both go to sleep."

"You don't care for that fellow, do you, Vangy?"

"I knew that was what you wanted to get at. Of course I don't care for him. I'm *your* wife, not his. You don't expect me to be the wife of two men at the same time, do you? Funny! Why don't you jealous husbands reflect once and a while that the very minute you suspect your wives you are pointing them out the way? We women are a stupid lot, at least those of us who spend our lives dressing up. And nine cases out of ten we wouldn't have sense enough to dream even of doing things if we weren't suspected of having already done them. There now! So I had something to say, too. I have been wanting to tell you that for a good long time. It'll help *me* to go to sleep. So good-night, dear. We're both ready now, aren't we? We're even."

"Good-night, Vangy."

Meanwhile a moon—an imperfect thing that looked mashed in—got up into the valley high enough to hang the bedroom with puzzling tapestry. It was an unreasonable hour on an unreasonable planet that whirled through unreasonable space. And a dog at the foot of the mountain, pulled back on

his haunches by ropes that moved a tide, howled like a wolf at that mashed-in moon, whined like an old man, whimpered like a child, spoke out for all that could not sleep.

And Mr. Buford got up.

He leaned over Evangeline. She was asleep now. She fitted perfectly into all that puzzling tapestry which wavered about the room. She was a pretty thing. She existed for beauty's sake, no other reason. She *was* like the marble Venus downstairs in the hall. Very much so. Especially in this half-toned moonlight. Her pointed breast looked like marble. Her neck looked fragile.

A bat came in. On tiptoe Mr. Buford drove the animal from the room. His feet were bare. But he tiptoed that he might walk yet more noiselessly. Then on tiptoe he left the bedroom and went downstairs.

The hall was very dark. Mr. Buford was glad he could not see Apollo. He caught Venus by the throat. Where was her heart— He hurt his arm on her hard, pointed breast. Why had she hurt him— And he went back to that fragile throat. Clutched it. Struggled there in the dark hall by himself with a piece of rock, with a pretty thing that existed for beauty's sake alone and no other earthly reason.

He struggled with rock, with matter, with natural law. And Venus toppled. She leaned toward him. With all his strength he held the rock back for a while. But Mr. Buford was sixty-nine and frail. When he fell Venus crashed down upon him, her pointed breast triumphant. And Marie, next morning, found them there in the hall, locked in each other's arms. For Mr. Buford had not gone to sleep without squirming and struggling.

MID-WESTERN

By Margaret Leroy

WHATEVER Aprils I may know,
April will always mean to me
A wet bank dark with violets,
A whitely blossoming locust tree.

And the valiant furrows of the plains
Could call me blithely from defeat,
Remembering like a battle shout
The lyric of the winter wheat!

EVERY man has two fatherlands. The first is where he was born; the second is where he first fell in love.

TO A BOY ON THE DEATH OF HIS SWEETHEART

By Richard Le Gallienne

YOU say—she died last night, and was so fair:
Come, let us sit and talk, and tell me all.
But twenty was she, and such golden hair!
And O to-morrow is her funeral.

Your life goes with her—you are twenty-two?
Come, drink this glass, and tell me more of her,
Her hair was gold, you said, her eyes were blue;
She was too young to die, she was too fair.

And all the treasure of her heart and mind
Rifled and wasted, lost and gone—ah! where?
And all her beauty scattered on the wind,
Like rose leaves on the garden, here and there.

And naught is left for you except to die,
Or be her pilgrim, till you meet once more;
Hers was the loveliest face under the sky,
Time never made a face like hers before.

Ah! let me go with you, and kneel and pray,
And take these flowers, sweet as her young breath;
And then, at the sad ending of the day,
Let you and I for her give thanks to Death—

Death that was kind, and loved her all too well
To watch her beauty wither here away,
But took her while she had so sweet a smell,
All in her blossom, like a hawthorn spray.

Death that is kind to her is kind to you:
Though eighty years shall whiten on your head,
She still shall be the morning and the dew,
And live for ever lovely, being dead.

THE ROMANTIC JOURNEYS OF GRANDMA

By Thyra Samter Winslow

GRANDMA awoke with a start. She gained consciousness with the feeling that something was just about to happen. Then she sank back again on the pillow with a comfortable sigh of remembrance. Of course—this was the day on which she was going travelling.

Even on usual days, Grandma could not lie in bed, idle. So much more reason why she should be up and about, to-day, with so much to do. Her train left at twelve o'clock—she had had her ticket and her berth reservation for over a week, her trunk was all packed, there were just a few necessary articles to be put into her bag—but the morning would be busy, as all mornings were at Fred's.

Grandma bathed and dressed hurriedly, her bent, rheumatic fingers grasping each hook and button with a nervous haste. As usual, she was the first one in the bathroom. This morning she was especially glad. For at Fred's, Grandma's second son's house, where she was visiting now, there was only one bathroom and there were eight in the family without her, if you count the two babies. If you didn't get in the bathroom first . . .

Grandma put on her neat housedress, as was her wont. She could change her dress later, and stuff the housedress into her bag. She arranged her thin grey hair in neat waves around her face —she could smooth that again, too.

From a room at the other end of the house Grandma heard a baby commence to cry. It was Ruthie, Nell's youngest baby, just a year old, one of Grandma's two great-grandchildren. Grandma loved little Ruthie a great deal, a fine baby—still, it did seem good that she wouldn't have to take care of her any more for a long time. Not that Grandma minded work—she had always worked, she liked something to do—but here at Fred's house there were so few moments when she wasn't working. Not that Fred's family were mean to her! Grandma would have been indignant if you had suggested that. Didn't they work as hard as she did, and harder? At seventy-three, Grandma was still strong and capable; no wonder they expected her to do her share and accepted it without comment.

Fred was a good son and a good husband and a good father. Could you expect much more? But Fred never had much of a business head. Here he was, at forty-nine, just about where he had been fifteen years before, bookkeeper at the Harper Feed Store, a good enough position when times were better, but, with everything so high, Fred's salary didn't go very far. Still, no use complaining or worrying him about it, it was the best he could do. Fred never had had much ambition or "get up." It was a good thing he had bought the house, years before. It had seemed too big and rambling then. It was just about the right size now, though not so awfully modern—and quite hard to keep clean.

Emma, Fred's wife, was a good woman and a good housekeeper. She wasn't like the average daughter-in-law, either. She never quarrelled with Grandma about things—in fact, she was

awfully kind, in her hurried, brusque way. Grandma sometimes wished she wasn't so quick about things, and decided—still, when one is as busy as Emma . . .

Emma was nearly Fred's age. They had been married twenty-five years and she had always been a good wife to him. They had three children, all girls. Grandma had been sorry there couldn't have been a son to help Fred share the burden of supporting the family. But things seemed going all right now—a little better than they had been, or, so the family seemed to think—and, as long as they were satisfied . . .

Nell, Fred's oldest daughter, had married, four years before, and had gone to housekeeping. But Homer Billingsley, the boy she had married, had been sick for almost a year, so they had given up their little cottage and were living "with the old folks." They had two children now, Freddie and Ruthie, nice, good children, too. Grandma liked Homer, Nell's husband, though she was sorry he was so much like Fred in his lack of ambition and power. Now that Homer was able to work again he had his old job at Malton's Hardware Store. There didn't seem much chance of his getting ahead there. Still, he was a good boy and awfully fond of Nell and the children.

Edna, Fred's second daughter, was stenographer at the First National Bank and made fifteen dollars a week. Edna was fine looking, really the beauty of the family. She paid her board every week, but never had much left over because she bought Alice's clothes, too, and, of course, being in the bank, she had to look nice herself. Alice, the youngest daughter, was seventeen and in High School. Grandma loved Alice, too. Of course the child was thoughtless, she could have helped her mother a little more with the housework or Nell with the babies, but Grandma knew that, at seventeen, it's pretty hard to sweep floors or take babies out. After all, Alice was young, and she ought to have a good time.

While she stayed at Fred's house, Grandma did her share of the work. Even this last morning she followed her usual routine.

She hurried to the room where Ruthie lay and soon had her quieted. When Ruthie had her bottle—Grandma had learned all about sterilizing, though she hadn't known there was such a thing when she brought up her own children—Grandma set the table, a plate, knife and spoon for each, salt and pepper casters that had been a wedding present to Emma and Fred, a butter dish with an uneven piece of butter in it, a sugar bowl containing rather lumpy sugar and a fluted sugar spoon, a dish of home-made plum preserves. She had the table all set when Emma hurried into the kitchen with a cheery, abrupt "Morning, Ma," and started the coffee.

At half-past seven all but Alice were ready for breakfast. Grandma had got the oatmeal out of the fireless cooker and boiled the eggs for Homer, who was rather delicate and needed eggs for breakfast. When the family sat down to their meal, Grandma put milk and sugar on little Freddie's oatmeal and saw that he ate it—Freddie didn't like oatmeal much.

"Well, Ma," said big Fred, who sat comfortably coatless, "so to-day's the day you go travelling."

"Yes, it is," said Grandma, and smiled.

"You got a good day for it. Let's see, you leave Lexington to-day at noon and get to New York to-morrow at two, don't you?"

"Yes, Fred," said Grandma.

"You know," he went on, munching toast as he talked, "I believe you enjoy travelling, going places. Never saw anything like it. Seems to me a woman your age would want to settle down, quiet. You could stay here all the time if you wanted to, you know that. Got a room all to yourself—more than you get at Mary's—and yet, off you go, after four or five months. Here you've got a good home and all that."

"Well," said Grandma, in her gentle, even tones, "you know you aren't the

only child I've got, Fred. There's Albert and Mary."

"Yes," Fred frowned. He disliked even hearing the name of Albert. It was the one thing that made him angry. "But we really want you, honest we do, Ma. Emma and the girls always miss you after you're gone"

"You bet," said Emma.

Grandma smiled. At least at Fred's home she was welcome and helpful. If she were only younger and stronger! At Mary's and Albert's, there was a wordless agreement that her visits end, almost automatically, at the end of four months. Only mere surface invitations of further hospitality were extended, "for politeness."

Fred and Homer finished eating and hurried off to business. Alice came down then, and Grandma served her, bringing in hot coffee and oatmeal, as Emma started to clear away the dishes.

Alice ate rapidly, then kissed Grandma good-bye—she didn't come home at noon—and skipped off. Grandma and her daughter-in-law washed the dishes and, when the dishes were done, they made the beds, one standing on each side, straightening the sheets and pulling up the covers simultaneously.

"Sure will miss you, Ma," said Emma. "Nell's no help at all. Don't blame her. Freddie tagging at her heels and the baby crying."

While Emma straightened out the downstairs rooms, Grandma helped Nell bathe and dress the babies. Then the expressman rang and Grandma hurried to the door, saw that he took her trunk and put the check in her purse. Then Grandma cleaned up the room she had occupied. It was time, then, for Grandma to get ready for her journey. Usually, she helped prepare dinner after these tasks were done, peeling potatoes, setting the table, for at Fred's one ate dinner in the middle of the day.

Grandma put on her travelling dress. It was her best dress, of soft grey silk crêpe, trimmed with a bit of fine cream lace at the throat. Albert had given it to her on her birthday, two years before. Over this she put her best coat of black ribbed silk, also a gift of Albert. She adjusted her neat bonnet —five years old but made over every year and you'd never guess it.

Emma and Nell were too busy with the dinner and the babies to go to the station with Grandma, but the street-car that passed the corner went right to the station, and Homer and Fred would be there to tell her good-bye. At eleven —Grandma believed in taking plenty of time, you never could tell what might happen on the way to the station— Grandma kissed Emma and Nell and Freddie and Ruthie, giving Ruthie a very tender hug and Freddie a hearty kiss, in spite of much stickiness from the penny lollypop he had been eating. She took her bag and hurrying as fast as she could—Grandma took little, slow rheumatic steps—caught the surface car.

In the railway station Grandma sat down gingerly on one of the long brown benches, carefully pulling her skirts away from suspicious, tobaccoy-looking spots on the floor, and waited for Fred and Homer and the train.

Fred and Homer came up, together, puffing, just before the train was due. Homer presented Grandma with a half-pound box of candy and Fred gave her a paper bag filled with fruit.

When the train came in, Fred and Homer both assisted Grandma in getting on, took her to her seat and kissed her, loudly, before their hurried exit— the Limited stops for only a minute at Lexington.

Then, as the train moved away, Grandma waved a fluttering good-bye to the two men and sighed again, with happiness. She was travelling!

II

Not consciously, of course, for she never would have admitted such a terrible fact, Grandma looked forward, all year, to her days of travel. Usually, each year contained three trips, each of about the same length, and these days were Grandma's golden milestones. Not that she wasn't happy the rest of the

time—of course she was—but this—well, this was different.

At Fred's now—Grandma was happy at Fred's, of course, everyone was friendly and pleasant, though her feet and head and sometimes her back ached at the end of the day. One isn't so young at seventy-three and younger people are apt to forget how tired seventy-three becomes, after innumerable answerings of the door, step-climbing and dish-washing. Grandma loved being useful, of course, but she did wish that there was a little more leisure, a little time to sit down and rest—if only Fred's and Albert's homes could be combined in some way!

Grandma had three children. When they were young there had never been much money, but Grandma had tried to do her best for them. They had lived in Lexington then, and the three had been brought up just alike and yet how differently they had turned out! There was Fred, quite poor but happy, still in Lexington, where he was born. Mary had married John Falconer when she was twenty-four and had gone to St. Louis to live, and Albert, the ambitious one of the family, had gone to New York in search of fortune and had found part of it, at least.

If only Fred and Albert hadn't been so foolish and quarrelled, years ago! But they had. Albert had tried to give Fred advice and Fred had resented it. They had made up the quarrel, but there was nothing that Fred would let Albert do for him, even if Albert had wanted to do something. Fred liked to refer, in scorn, to his elder brother as "that New York millionaire," and say things about being "just as well off if I haven't got his money." But then, Albert probably forgot, most of the time, that he had a younger brother. Outside of a polite inquiry, when Grandma arrived, he never referred to Fred at all. It worried Grandma to think that her children weren't good friends, but she knew she could never do anything to make them feel differently. Years and circumstances had taken them too far apart.

Grandma had no favourite child, unless it was a slight, natural leaning toward her only daughter. She liked Albert and was glad she was on her way to visit him. She just wished that Albert wasn't so—well, so cold. He didn't mean anything, of course. When one is busy all day on the Stock Exchange one hasn't time for other things. And, when one is as rich as Albert, there are so many things to take up one's time. Albert was awfully good to Grandma. She told herself that many times. He asked her if she needed anything, whenever she visited him. He frequently gave her expensive presents. She wouldn't take any more money from him than she had to, and her wants were simple, for that wouldn't have been right, though she let him give her some on her last visit and had given it to Nell for Homer—he had been sick then—without letting Fred find out.

Grandma liked it all right at Albert's. How could there be anything to complain of? At seventy-three, Grandma had learned to make the best of things. Albert was Grandma's oldest child and now he was fifty-two. His ménage consisted of his wife, Florence; their two children, Albert, junior, who, at twenty-four, was being taught the business of Wall Street; their daughter, Arlene, twenty, and six servants.

The Albert Cunninghams lived in a very large apartment in Park Avenue. Mrs. Cunningham was of rather a good New York family. Albert had met her after his first taste of success and had been greatly impressed with her and with her antecedents. Even then Albert had learned to look ahead. The family had had some years of social strivings, but now lived rather quietly. Arlene had made her début the year before and now entertained and went out quite a little. Albert, junior, was rather a serious fellow, though he, too, enjoyed the social life that was open to him. Altogether, they were fairly sensible, decent people, a bit snobbish, perhaps, very self-centred, but with no really objectionable features.

The thing that Grandma couldn't understand nor enjoy in the Albert Cunninghams' family life was the, to her, great coldness and formality. Grandma's idea of how a family ought to live was the way Fred's family lived, only with more money and more leisure and more pleasure and a servant or two, friendly, jolly, intimate. At Albert's, the life was strangely lonely and distant. Grandma never felt quite at ease nor at home. She had no definite place in the family life. She had the fear, constantly, that she was doing something wrong, much more so than at Mary's where her acts were criticized and commented on. No one ever gave Grandma a harsh word at Albert's. Albert, dignified; Florence, courteous, calm; Junior, a younger edition of his father; Arlene, gentle, distant, quiet—were all kind to Grandma. But most of the time they unthinkingly ignored her. She didn't fit in, she knew that.

At Albert's Grandma had her own room and her own bath, as did each member of the family. There was no regular "family breakfast." Albert and Junior breakfasted about nine, going to the office in the closed car. Florence and Arlene breakfasted in their rooms. Grandma had gone to the dining-room for breakfast, on her first visit there eight years ago, after Grandpa died and her own modest home had been broken up. But Florence decided that it would be more comfortable for Grandma if she breakfasted in her room. So each morning, about nine, Grandma's tray was brought up to her by Florence's own maid, Terry, who asked, each time, "if there is anything I can do?" Grandma rather resented a personal maid. Wasn't she able to bathe and dress herself, even if she was seventy-three? Grandma was always dressed when Terry knocked.

All day there was nothing for Grandma to do at Albert's. She couldn't help at all around the house. She found that out, at her first visit. There was no darning nor mending to be done—a sewing woman came in regularly to do the things that Terry could not do. Albert didn't care for the home dishes that had once delighted him and the cook didn't want anyone bothering around the kitchen. Grandma had luncheon at one, with Florence and Arlene, when they were at home, which was seldom enough. In the afternoon, on nice days, Grandma went for a drive, unless the cars were being used. Usually Grandma went alone, getting real pleasure out of the things she saw; sometimes Florence went with her. Florence, too, occasionally took Grandma to teas and receptions and musicales, most of which bored Grandma and at none of which did she feel at home.

Grandma wondered where all of the old ladies were in New York. She seldom saw any. At the theatre, where she was taken once in a while, she would see white-haired old dowagers, carefully marcelled and massaged, in evening gowns with very low-cut bodices. Grandma didn't mean that kind of old lady. She was always looking for comfortable old ladies, with neatly parted hair, ample old ladies with little rheumatic hands and wrinkles, but she never found them.

Dinner, at Albert's, was at seven. When the family dined alone, at home, the meals were about the same, good things to eat, but everything so cold and distant. It was hard for Grandma to remember just what to do, so that Florence and Arlene wouldn't think she didn't know, though they were always polite and gracious. Grandma was constantly afraid she would spill things when the maid presented the silver dishes to her or that she'd take too large a portion for politeness. Grandma was served first, you see, and that made it harder still—she couldn't watch to see the way the others did.

When the family was having a real dinner party Grandma found that it was easier for everyone if she had a tray in her room. She really liked that just as well—it was nice, seated at the little table in her room, comfortably unannoyed by manners. About half of the time the Albert Cunninghams did not dine at home—Arlene and Junior went

to numerous dinners and even Florence and Albert had frequent engagements. Then Grandma usually dined alone in the big empty dining-room, a little, lonely figure amid empty chairs, silver and glass. She would have preferred a tray in her room, then, but didn't like to mention it—this arrangement seemed to suit Florence. Grandma's meals were always excellently prepared and served, but eating alone in a big, still room isn't very jolly.

After dinner, Grandma was occasionally included in some social affair, but nearly always she was supposed to sit in the library until about nine or ten and then retire, as the other members of the family sometimes did when they were at home. The family saw that Grandma was given interesting light fiction and magazines full of stories and current events, but Grandma had never had enough leisure in her youth to find time to learn to enjoy reading. She could read only a short time without falling asleep.

Grandma knitted, too, so she was glad when the fad came back so she could be modern in something. Albert's family approved of knitting, and on the last visit her old fingers had made many pairs of grey and tan socks, with a bit of colour worked into the tops of them. Now she was glad to be able to get to knitting more socks—she had had no time for it since she had been there before.

Yes—Albert and his family were awfully nice—of course they didn't mean anything when they paid no attention to Grandma, when their days went on as serenely undisturbed as if she were not there. They asked her how she felt, nearly every day, a cool "trust you are well this morning, Mother," and gave her presents. But thinking of the lonely hours in her room, the tiresome evenings, the long, useless, dragged-out days, Grandma wasn't enthusiastic over her visit with Albert.

III

Mary, Mrs. John Falconer, Grandma's youngest child, had always been a bit of her favourite. Mary still lived in St. Louis, where she had gone after her marriage. The Falconers had four children, two sons of eighteen and fourteen, two daughters, sixteen and eleven. John Falconer, a lawyer of moderate means, was quite stingy in family matters. Although he had a great deal more money than Fred, the family occupied a much smaller house, though it was modern and in a good neighbourhood, and Grandma had to share the bedroom of the two daughters. Mary's family had an advantage over Fred's in having one maid, who did all of the cooking and washing and some of the cleaning, so there was not so much for Grandma to do. Grandma felt that she should have been very happy with the Falconers. But they were disagreeable people to live with. Grandma tried not to see their faults but it was not easy for her to be contented during her visits there.

The Falconers had the habit of criticism. Nothing was ever just right with them. Mary always told Grandma that if it hadn't been for Grandma's encouragement she would never have married John Falconer—if she had waited she probably could have done much better. John Falconer was a former Lexington boy whom Mary had met when he visited his old home. Grandma didn't remember that she had encouraged the match except to tell Mary that John was a nice boy and would probably make a good husband—Mary had been the one who seemed enthusiastic. But, somehow, Grandma was blamed whenever John showed disagreeable characteristics.

Mary was dissatisfied with her social position, with the amount of money John gave her to spend, with her children. She spoke slurringly of Albert and "his rich family who are in society." Mary would ask Grandma innumerable questions about the way the Albert Cunninghams lived, copy them when circumstances permitted and later to bring the unused bits of information into the conversation, with disagreeable slurs.

"I guess Albert wouldn't call this dinner good enough for him, would he? It's a wonder you are satisfied here, Mamma, without a butler to answer the door or a maid to bring breakfast to your room," or "It's a wonder Albert and Florence wouldn't do something for Irene. I bet she's a lot smarter and better looking than their stuck-up daughter. But not a thing does he do for her, except send a little box on Christmas—gave Irene a cheap wrist watch last year — you could buy the same kind right here in St. Louis. He could keep it for all I'd care."

The four Falconer children were badly brought up and noisy. They interrupted each other or all talked at once. At meals they reached across the table for dishes of food. The one maid had had no training and, as she did the cooking, her waitress duties consisted of putting bowls and platters of food on the table. Then John Falconer made a pretence of serving, always, after one or two plates, he'd "pass the things around so you can all help yourselves."

As there was no attempt to show Grandma any special favour—she was never served first, the first plate going to the person in the greatest hurry to get away, frequently Tom, the eldest son—usually when the bowl or platter reached Grandma there was little left for her. Grandma didn't mind this, unless the food happened to be a favourite—she had become accustomed to little sacrifices while raising her family. There was always enough bread and butter.

What Grandma did object to at Mary's was the spirit of unrest, of unkindness, the disagreeable taunts of the family, the noise and disorder. Everyone criticized Grandma, calling her attention to the way she held her fork, though their own manners were frequently insufferable. They criticized, too, Grandma's pronunciation of words, idioms of Lexington, and errors in grammar. These were made much of and repeated, with laughter. Then, too, if Grandma showed ignorance of any modern appliance or invention, this was thought to be a great joke and was introduced as a tit-bit in the table conversation.

Grandma darned all of the stockings at Mary's, there always seemed to be a basketful, and took care of the bedroom in which she slept, relieving the two girls of an unwelcome duty. She straightened the living-room, for Mary hated housework and grumbled about it and the overworked maid never quite got through her round of duties. But Grandma was not too busy at Mary's. She liked having something to do. It was the taunts that made her unhappy, the little barbed things the family said. John Falconer made Grandma feel that she was an actual expense, that the amount of food she ate was a real item in the household budget. Mary came to her with little whines about the relatives—though they lived in other cities and paid little attention to her—about her husband, how stingy he was, how much better she could have done, had she not taken her mother's advice in her marriage, about the children, how much money they spent, how they quarrelled with each other, how disobedient they were. Grandma always went from Mary's home to Fred's, and, though she knew the work that awaited her, the tired hours in store, she actually looked forward to the next visit.

IV

So now, Grandma was travelling again. And, as the train covered the miles away from Lexington, Grandma put aside the worries of the visit she had just had, the memories of the unpleasantness of the visit with Mary, the apprehensions of the visit that awaited her. Grandma shed, all at once, all of these things and emerged, a wonderful, new personality, a dear, happy little old lady, travelling, Grandma became, as she always became, three days of each year, the woman she would have liked to have been, the old lady she sometimes dreamed she was.

First, Grandma rang for the porter. She was well supplied with money, for Albert always sent her a cheque for travelling expenses. She loved feeling independent, a personality. When the porter came, Grandma demanded, in the gentle, well-bred tone Florence might have used, that the porter bring her an envelope for her bonnet, a pillow for her head, a stool for her feet. She tipped him generously enough to make him grin his thanks and hurry to her whenever she rang. There were even porters who said, "Yes'm, you travelled on my car before," when they saw Grandma.

From her bag, Grandma took out a small black lace cap, with a bit of perky lavender ribbon on it and adjusted it on her thinning hair. At Mary's house they were always telling her how thin her hair looked, the young boy even hinting something about old people who ought to be wearing wigs. Albert had sent her the cap in her last Christmas box, and, as usual, she had saved it for travelling. Grandma put on, too, a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles. She had needed them for years, but at first a sort of pride in her good eyes had kept her from getting them. Then, at Fred's, she had been too busy; at Albert's, no one paid much attention to her needs; at Mary's, they had laughed at her near-sightedness without offering a corrective. When she was at Albert's, last year, she had told him, finally, her need of glasses and the next day Florence had driven her to an oculist. But she felt that she had annoyed and disturbed Florence, that getting glasses for an old lady wasn't just in Florence's pattern of things.

Grandma put the cheap candy and the fruit from Fred and Homer into her bag. It had been awfully kind and good of them. She took out her grey knitting and added row after row, as the minutes passed.

Then Grandma rang for the porter again. But, before he came, she looked around at her fellow passengers, as she always looked at them when she travelled. Two seats in front of her sat a tired-looking woman of about forty, with a thin, drawn face. Knitting in hand, Grandma took slow, careful little steps up the train to her.

"How do you do?" said Grandma, with her sweetest smile, "I wonder if you won't have tea with me, keep an old lady company? It seems so, so unsocial, having tea alone."

The woman gasped and looked at Grandma. She saw the well-dressed, comfortable little old lady, with the frill of soft lace at throat and wrists, a tiny black cap on her grey hair, grey knitting in her gnarled hands, a picture-book Grandma for all the world.

"Why, yes, I—that would be delightful," she said.

Grandma led the way back to her own seat. When the porter came she ordered tea and toast and little cakes and sandwiches, "and some of that good orange marmalade you always have on this road."

Grandma hadn't had any lunch but she didn't say so. When the little table was adjusted and the tea things brought in, Grandma poured tea, as if, every day, in her own home, the routine included the serving of tea at a dear little tea table.

Grandma listened sympathetically to the other woman's story. Grandma knew that each woman who was travelling had a story and would tell it, if encouraged at all, but she wasn't much interested—she had heard so many stories during the past years. Then, when her guest had finished, Grandma talked.

Grandma didn't say much, really. She told about her visits, about her two wonderful sons and her splendid daughter. As Grandma told these things, they, too, emerged into beauty, the journey threw a magic over them as it did over Grandma. The things she told were so real that Grandma believed them herself, because she wanted to.

"I have three children, so, of course, I spend four months of the year with each of them. Each of them wanted me all the time—they are such good children—so the best way seemed to be to

divide the time. I'm on my way to visit my older son, now. Maybe, as you've lived in New York, you've heard of him—he has a seat on the Stock Exchange and is director in so many things—Albert Morrell Cunningham. His wife was a Mornington, and they have two such wonderful children, a boy and a girl. Arlene made her début last year, so you can imagine what a good time she's having and what fun it is to be there with her, she's so popular and pretty. I'll show you her picture, later. Each day that I'm there, nearly, they do something for me, a drive in the park, theatres and concerts. I really get too gay in the city—it's wonderful.

"Then I go to see Mary, my only daughter, and you know how a mother feels toward a daughter. She is married to a lawyer in St. Louis and they have four of the dearest children. The oldest, a boy, is eighteen and the youngest, a girl, is eleven. Quite an ideal family, isn't it? Mary's husband is quite well-to-do, but they live so comfortably and simply, no airs at all. Mary doesn't care a great deal for society, just wrapped up in her husband and children, but she goes with such nice people.

"I've just come from my second son, Fred. And there—perhaps you'd never guess it, people have flattered me so long about looking youthful that I believe them—but I've two great-grandchildren, the oldest three years old, the youngest just a year, the dearest things. Nell, the children's mother, and her husband and the children are all living right at home. Fred and his wife won't hear of them going away. They were housekeeping for a while, but the family didn't like it—they are all so devoted to the children. There are two other girls in the family besides Nell and they have a great big old-fashioned home, set way back in a broad lawn, lots of trees and flowers. Yes, it's Fred's own home. It's a good thing he bought such a big one, years ago, he needs it with so many young people. They do have such good times together—and, of course, it's young people who keep us all young, these days."

Then, from her bag, Grandma drew a bundle of photographs. The photographers, from the maker of the shiny products of Lexington to the creator of the soft sepias of Fifth Avenue, had, with their usual skill at disguise, smoothed away the lines of discontent on Mary's face, the bold impudence of her children, had added a little kindness and humaneness to Florence and Albert, had made Fred's family look placid, undisturbed and prosperous. The pictures showed Grandma's family to be all she had said of them, even to dimpled little Ruthie, taken just a few weeks before, on a post card at a neighbourhood photographer's.

It didn't sound like bragging, as Grandma told things. It was just the simple, contented story of an old lady of seventy-three, who spent her days satisfied and serene, travelling from one loved and beloved set of relatives to another.

When tea was finished, Grandma allowed the other woman to return to her seat with a gentle nod and a "thank you for keeping an old woman company." Then Grandma knitted and looked at the passengers again. Always, whenever she travelled, out of the set that presented itself, Grandma was able to find those she needed.

A tiny, plump little woman with a too-fat baby was seated just a seat or so back of Grandma, on the left. It was to her that Grandma went, now.

"May I hold the baby?" she asked. "I know how tired you must get, holding him all day, on a day like this. I've two great-grandchildren. Your baby is just about in between them, in age, I think. Sometimes I hold them for just a little while and I know how heavy babies can be."

Deftly, Grandma took the child in her arms and settled him comfortably.

"When dinner is announced," said Grandma, "you go and eat. I'll take care of the baby. It will be a rest for you—it is so difficult travelling with a baby—you'll enjoy your dinner more

alone. Sometimes, when we go on picnics with my great-grandchildren . . ."

Grandma told about the babies, about their mother, about her own grown-up children, whom she visited. She even told little things about their childhood, as mothers tell to mothers, but, always, she came back to the present, telling of her visits, encased in the rose colour of her journey. Not that Grandma told deliberate falsehoods. She didn't claim servants or wealth for Fred nor jollity for Albert. But each fact she brought forth was broidered with the romance that travel brought to Grandma — the stories all showed Grandma welcome, beloved, happy, made her children kind, considerate, affectionate, successful, capable. Grandma helped her listeners, too, for she spread some of this haze over them. You can't envy, you must enter into the pleasure of it, when an old lady of seventy-three shows you the treasures that a lifetime has handed to her.

Grandma smiled as she sat with the little mother and her baby. And she smiled as she held the heavy, squirming bundle, while the mother ate dinner.

"It's a real pleasure to help you even a little," said Grandma, as the woman came back from the dining car to claim her baby and thank Grandma.

Grandma washed her face carefully before she went in to her own dinner. She took a clean handkerchief from her bag, dainty, lavender bordered, the present that Edna, Fred's second daughter, had given her last Christmas. On it she sprinkled a bit of perfume, a gift from Alice, two years before. She smoothed her hair, brushed the dust from her waist. A new adventure always awaited her in the dining car.

She walked with stiff little steps the length of the three cars, holding tight to the seats as she passed. And, through the cars, she smiled at the children and to grown-ups, smiles a bit patronizing, perhaps, as smiles should be from such a distinguished, contented old lady.

In the diner, Grandma was seated across from a stout, middle-aged man, who was eating an enormous meal. She smiled at him. He couldn't misjudge her—one doesn't flirt that way at seventy-three.

"It's a wonderful day for travelling, isn't it?" she said. "Last time I travelled, four months ago . . ."

Grandma was telling of her children, of her journeys.

Grandma ordered carefully—a steak, you are really safe about steaks when you travel, a fresh vegetable, a green salad, a bit of pastry, black coffee. Grandma ordered as if the ordering of a dinner were a usual but precious rite. She felt correct, prosperous, a woman of the world. The man across the table, pleased with his meal and moved a bit by Grandma's story of her happy and fortunate life, her devoted children, saw in Grandma, the things that made this devotion. He even grew a bit gallant.

"I can see why your children are so good to you, ma'am. It makes me wish I had a grandma or mother like you myself." This during mouthfuls.

Grandma was equal to it.

"Why me, I'm just what my children have made me. Just think of you, making such lovely speeches to an old lady. You're deserving of the best mother a man ever had, I'm sure."

There were more pretty speeches. The man became almost flowery. Grandma actually blushed before she had finished her dessert. Grandma paid her check, adding her usual generous tip—the stranger had offered to pay but Grandma wouldn't have that, of course. Then, as Grandma arose, the man opposite rose, too, and courteously escorted her through the cars and to her seat, stopping for a moment to talk.

Grandma couldn't knit at night. The motion of the car and the electric lights were not a good combination for her old eyes. She put her knitting into her bag, and extracted a deck of cards, flamboyant, with green and gold gilt-looking backs. She chose now two young women and a good-looking young man

in his early thirties. She approached them all with the same question.

"Wouldn't you like a game of bridge? It seemed so lonely, an evening alone, in a sleeper—"

Strangely, all three did play bridge and would like a game. The porter brought a little table, again, and they played, rather indifferently, to be sure—Grandma was no expert and one of the young women played even a poorer game than she did—but several hours passed pleasantly. Then, after they stopped playing, Grandma brought the fruit from her bag. Grandma told them about Fred bringing the fruit to her, and, as they ate, she told, too, of her visits, of her children, her grandchildren and the two little great-grand ones. The three card-players really seemed interested, so of course the photographs were brought out for a round of approval.

After the guests had gone to their seats, Grandma had her berth made up. She was rather particular about this—she wanted it made with her feet to the engine. Grandma thought this knowing about head and feet gave her a travelled air. Besides, she really didn't like to feel that she was travelling backwards.

In the dressing-room she put on her violet silk dressing gown, a gift from Florence three years before, which she kept carefully for travelling, and a frivolous little cap of cream lace, to keep the dust out of her hair while she slept. She spread her ivory travelling articles in their leather case—five years old on her last birthday—before her, and, as she prepared for sleep, talked pleasantly with the women who happened to come into the dressing-room while she was there.

Grandma slept fairly well for travelling, waking up frequently to pull up the shade and look out on the hurrying landscape, the occasional lights, the little towns. She thought it was mighty pleasant travelling.

She was up at seven and dressed swiftly. A new woman had got on during the night and now occupied the seat opposite Grandma, a well-gowned woman in her late thirties, with a smart, city-like air.

Grandma nodded a pleasant good-morning.

"We seem to be making good time," she said.

"Yes, indeed," the woman smiled, "a pleasant day for travelling."

With the air of one born traveller to another, Grandma talked a bit, then motioned the woman to sit beside her. The pleasant conversation gave Grandma a warm feeling of well-being. She suggested breakfast and the two of them went in together, the younger woman steadying Grandma just a bit when the train swayed round a curve.

It was a pleasant breakfast. Grandma ordered three-minute eggs. They were the way she liked eggs best, but she seldom had them. At Albert's it seemed so self-assertive to ask for things like that, special directions and everything—and at Fred's and Mary's!

Grandma and her new friend talked about New York, about plays they had both seen the year before. They discussed food and the high cost of living, servants, the usual things that two hardly acqainted women talk of, when circumstance throws them together. There was nothing condescending in the new acquaintance's attitude. Why should there have been? Grandma was neither an unnecessary member of a cool, indifferent household nor an overworked old woman—she was the ideal Grandma, cultured, clever, kindly. It was no wonder, then, that, after breakfast, the two of them should loiter in Grandma's seat and Grandma should show a few family photographs and dwell, pleasantly, on how fortunate she was in having such splendid sons, such a lovely daughter and such wonders of grandchildren, to say nothing of the two babies.

Then the woman suggested that she and Grandma go to the observation car, and, before long, Grandma was seated in a big chair, knitting on the grey sock, again, and glancing at the flying scenery.

All the morning Grandma's former

acquaintances came to talk to her. The thin woman with the sad face offered her some candy. Grandma had a little chat with the plump mother and baby and held the baby again while his mother ate luncheon. The stout man, reading a magazine, dropped it long enough to come over and ask Grandma how she was feeling and if there was anything he could do for her. Grandma's bridge companions, now well acquainted, with the sudden friendship that travel brings, gathered around Grandma for a chat, laughing at everything. Several others, coming into the car, stopped for a word with Grandma.

Grandma and her latest acquaintance had luncheon together, too. Then, after luncheon, Grandma prepared, a whole hour ahead, as she always did, for the end of her journey. She washed off as much of the soot as she could. She took off the little lace cap and replaced it with her decent old bonnet, which had been resting in its bag all this time. She slipped on her black travelling coat over her grey crêpe dress. She took out a clean handkerchief, sprinkling a bit of perfume on it. Before closing her bag, Grandma took out the cheap candy that Homer had brought to the station and gave it, with a gracious smile, to the woman with the baby. It was good to be able to give something—and, besides, what could she do with the candy at Albert's? She didn't care for candy and even the servants would have laughed at it.

Grandma closed her bag then and sat waiting. Her chance acquaintances passed, nodded, smiled and talked. Grandma was a real person of importance, a dear, happy old lady, with a devoted family, spending her life contentedly divided among them. Didn't all these people know about Grandma? Hadn't they heard of her children and her grandchildren and her great-grandchildren? Hadn't they seen their photographs, even? Didn't they know that, after four pleasant months with Fred and his happy, jovial family, she was on her way to visit Albert, rich and prominent and kind?

V

THE train drew into Grand Central Station. Grandma, trembling a little, for the excitement of travelling is apt to make one tremble at seventy-three—Grandma allowed the porter to brush her coat, bade farewell to her train acquaintances, followed her bag down the aisle and into the station.

A man in a chauffeur's uniform took Grandma's bag and addressing Grandma politely, gravely, told her that Mr. and Mrs. Cunningham were sorry, but engagements prevented them from meeting her. They would see her at dinner at seven.

Grandma, with short, unsteady little steps, went out to the waiting car. There was something very near a tear in her eye. After all, travelling has its difficulties when one is seventy-three. The shell of radiance, of smiling independence of being cared for, important, loved, fell away. Grandma was just a little, tired, lonely old lady again. Another of Grandma's romantic journeys was over.

A WOMAN can love only one man at a time. Her husband is lucky if he's that man.

IN THE DARK

By Paul Hervey Fox

I

THE visitor, according to the maid, did not choose to give his name, and Gloria rose with a slight stir of perplexity.

It was a very different emotion that possessed her when she saw the person who was advancing towards her across the long, handsome living-room of her husband's country house at Westmore.

The man who had presented himself anonymously was a short, blunt figure wearing an air of cultivated aggression. His sunken eyes were pale and nebulous, but in their intensity they appeared to burn. He had harsh, twisted lips, and a head that was square and uncouth in its outlines.

To a casual eye there was nothing in that mere ungainly aspect that should have caused Gloria Trench to catch her breath, lift her hand unconsciously in a gesture of fear, and feel sickeningly that her voice had deserted her.

Yet she was staring at him hypnotically, and to break the spell she closed her eyes. In the instant before they flickered open again, she saw once more that picture from the past which she had torn out of her mind only by a directed and indomitable effort of will. . . .

Seven years ago! A quiet night had settled down upon a village in West Virginia. In the main room of a flimsy cottage that stood alone upon the high-road an oil lamp threw a dull, morose yellow upon drab walls and dilapidated furnishings.

Before one of the windows, peering out at the lonely reaches of farmland, sombre in the blackness, stood a girl with a thick loosened mane of tawny hair. Her attitude was tense and her mind far away from the vista before her eyes.

She was listening to the confused mutter of noise that came from a room above. Each thin, low vibration was vivid and terrifying to her. The sound of a man's voice growling vaguely to himself, the high-pitched clatter of a fallen glass, the stumble for its recovery, and then the continuance of the low growling voice, were minutiæ that she caught with painful keenness.

All day long it had been going on, steadily, quietly, growing worse. And one day was now like another. There was no hope, no chance, none whatever.

She turned away from the window with a nervous movement to realize that she had completely forgotten the presence of her caller. Abraham Storch was sitting in a low chair, watching her with his fanatic, rigid head thrust slightly upwards and forwards. He was the travelling and self-ordained preacher to the dozen hamlets of the region, motivated by some obscure and self-righteous austerity.

He rose suddenly to his feet.

"I must go," he said. "I exhort you to put your faith in the Lord. Oh, miserable sinner that is man, his ways are evil and his heart impure!" He rolled his eyes sanctimoniously upward.

His singsong voice had a peculiarly ugly and rasping note. His accent was illiterate, and he delivered his words with a manner of violent bigotry.

There was no help here, no sympathy from this dour and bitter nature

for Gloria O'Malley. Yet somehow his presence was in itself comforting, the presence of some other human to help her forget her fear and loathing of the brute upstairs, the brute who was her husband.

She opened her lips to detain Storch and, as she did so, the crash of an overturned table in the room above paralyzed her utterance. She waited, listening, her breath coming hard. Listening, too, Storch stared at her with his gleaming, sunken eyes.

In the space that followed the sound of lumbering, awkward footfalls descending the stairs came to their ears. Then the huge figure of Glenton O'Malley appeared, wavering unsteadily in the aperture of the doorway. His red beard took a streaked, sinister colour from the light. His heavy, handsome face, set upon a magnificent pair of shoulders, wore the unmistakable signs of drink.

He slouched into the room, following the outlines of the walls, and threw himself into a wide chair in the farther corner. A meaningless grin whipped suddenly from his face.

"What—what are you looking at me—looking at me like that for?" he said slowly. "You're my wife, Glory, hey? Hey?"

At his reiterated query she made a low, unintelligible sound of assent. He continued in his halting, ponderous voice.

"You think I'm drunk. Damn you, you do! Well . . . well, maybe I am!"

He broke off with a silly chuckle, wagging his lowered head. When he glanced up his gaze fell upon Storch.

"Hullo, a newcomer? How'd you get in? The parson, hey? Well, I don't want any parsons around here. Get out!"

"The devil has you, Glenton O'Malley, body and soul! You shall go down to the fiery furnace, to the eternal torments!"

Abraham Storch, ignoring Gloria's hand thrust up in terror and restraint, stared into the eyes of the other man.

O'Malley's brow broke into frowning wrinkles, his lips twitched with rage, and then suddenly his face cleared and he gave way to an inane laughter. His head bowed down towards his knees and his body shook loosely.

There was a minute of silence. The next instant his head went up again and, with a scowl, he lurched clumsily to his feet.

"You whining nigger!" he roared. "What was that you said to me? Did you hear me tell you to clear out? Did you hear me? What are you doing here with my wife, my wife Glory? You psalm-singing dog, I'll—I'll—"

His fumbling fingers explored the pocket of a loose coat. They came out with a jerk. O'Malley deliberately directed the barrel of an old-fashioned military revolver at the fanatic, and his finger closed upon the trigger.

There was a quick cry, the flash of a woman's arm, and the revolver flew in an aimless arc to the floor.

Glenton O'Malley turned with a muffled, choking sound. In an instant he had caught up a chair and sent it hurtling at her. She pressed close to the wall, and it flew past, bringing down the lamp with a sudden clatter and plunging the room into darkness.

With an oath O'Malley lunged in her direction. She could discern the great bulk of his figure like a grey silhouette. She fled to the table and, groping there, found and unsheathed a long hunting-knife. The next instant O'Malley's arms were about her, crushing her. With his hot, reeking breath against her face, she fought to free herself. Suddenly she heard him gasp, and in the darkness perceived that two hands were tightening about his throat from behind. He staggered backwards under the clutch, and as he did so the woman, in the madness and hatred that had possessed her, lifted the sheath-knife. With her eyes shut tight, she drove it smoothly home. . . .

After that there seemed to fall a silence, a mysterious and dreadful silence, accented by the sound of something dripping monotonously and delicately,

and by the hard breathing of a man and a woman who faced each other across a huddled mass upon the floor.

It was the woman who found her voice first.

"You must go," she said in a whisper, as though fearful of disturbing the shape by her feet. "You must tell them in the village that I have murdered my husband."

The voice of Abraham Storch was hoarse and trembling.

"No, no! Not that. I helped you, too. It was murder. But in self-defence. We are not guilty. But—but—wait! You must not tell them."

"Why not?" she asked slowly.

She seemed to be in a vague lethargy. Everything was so very far away, everything so indistinct. Something very terrible had happened. It was difficult to remember. Something had happened.

Then she heard Abraham Storch speaking in his raspy, broken voice:

"We must not tell them. Say that a nigger attacked you. Your husband—they fought—he was killed. That is best. . . . I am afraid. I did not mean to. . . . Oh, God, oh, God, have pity; have mercy upon me! I have endeavoured to serve Thee, oh, Lord!"

He began to sob. With something like a dull curiosity Gloria noted that under that harsh and bigoted aggression was only a pitiable cowardice.

"Go, then," she said wearily. "I will do as you say. I do not know. It does not matter."

She heard him shuffle to the door, open it, and very cautiously close it. She stood alone in the darkness and the silence and for a long time she did not move. . . .

* * * * *

That was seven years ago. And now, many miles away, as Mrs. George Trench, she was staring across the handsome living-room of her husband's country house at Westmore at the grotesque and unforgotten figure of Abraham Storch.

II

"I HAVE searched for you in many places and for long months. The Lord in His wisdom has guided me to you at last."

Gloria found her voice labouredly.

"Yes?" she said. "What—what is it you want?"

The fanatic leaned forward in the chair he had taken and his fingers curved into a grip upon the arms.

"Confess!" he exclaimed hoarsely. "Confess, I say to you, that your sin may be forgiven."

She put her hand up to her eyes with an absent, graceful gesture.

"I don't understand. I don't see—"

He waved aside her stumbling sentences. He spoke rapidly, more shrilly.

"No; but I see! I have been delivered to the torments for seven years. I have known no happiness, no peace Satan blinded my eyes that I might not discover the path to repentance and salvation. You took a life that was the merciful Lord's, and I aided you. Confess before it is too late. Stand before the world and let the world judge the sin."

"Now?" Gloria exclaimed incredulously. "You and I have paid in full for what happened that night. And besides, it was justice, justice! We were defending ourselves. He would have killed us. Any court would acquit us. I wanted to tell the truth at the time. But you would not let me. And I cannot now. It is impossible, mad!"

"Why not now?" came the harsh-voiced query. "Cast out the devil's counsels from your heart!"

"Then—it would have been different. I had nothing to lose by the truth. Now I have my position, my place in the sun that I have fought for, desired so terribly, bought by prayer and hope and anxiety. My husband, my friends, would suffer now as well as I."

"What are they compared to the word of your own conscience?"

"You don't realize," she answered excitedly. "How can I make you understand? It was horrible to me. For months I did not sleep. But never,

never for an instant, had I any doubt that you and I did right. It was in self-defence. He would have killed us. I know what he was. Only once before had I ever opposed him when he was like that. And I know what he was! He would have killed both of us!"

"You hold within you the seeds of evil. You hide from yourself God's awful word. It is for His appointed judges on earth to say whether you are guiltless."

Gloria Trench lifted her hand dramatically. "Why can't you see? You follow a code, and put your faith in a machine. Ours was the real justice. You argue for conventions with the blind belief that God is responsible for them." She halted suddenly in perplexity. "You ask me to confess, to break up my home and happiness, merely to receive the same verdict from the world which my conscience has already given me. But why is it that you ask *me* to do it?"

He bent forward and covered his face with his hands.

"I cannot," he whimpered. "I dare not. You must, for I cannot. My life has been ruined. I cannot preach the Lord's word with this deadly sin upon my heart. There is no hope save by public atonement. Often I have brought myself to the very point of confession and failed. Only you can save me. And you must. You shall! With the last strength of will that is in me, I demand that you do what I dare not do. And if you fail, I warn you that there are still other ways."

He rose to his feet, and when he spoke again his voice was calmer. "I will leave you now to think upon what I have said. If within three days you have not confessed, I know a worse method."

"I will never confess!" Gloria cried, gazing at his drawn, intense face, and then, as she saw him moving to the door and saw with him all her hope and joy retreating from her for ever, she added in a panic: "Wait!"

He turned, and she fought to think, to gain time, to find some solution.

"Stay here. Have dinner and meet my husband. Stay to-night. We must talk first. I—I may be made to see your point after all."

His eyes were bright and hard.

"Now I know that you are lying to me. You will attempt to divert me from my purpose. It was useless to see you. You do not mean to confess. But I will stay as you suggest. I am prepared. Perhaps you will have wished later that you had let me go."

Abraham Storch noted that her expression had oddly changed. He turned to find that a man, tall and pleasant-faced, had just entered the room.

"Do you know my husband—this is an old friend of mine from Virginia," she faltered, with the fanatic's vaguely terrifying threat still ringing in her ears.

III

DINNER that evening was genuinely an ordeal. At times Gloria stopped to wonder at her own power of self-control. She had taken her husband aside and explained the visitor:

"He is an eccentric old preacher whom I used to know. You mustn't mind him, George. He was a very good friend to me once."

George Trench stared curiously at the fanatic several times, but he said nothing, and, apparently, the explanation satisfied him.

But Gloria, with a heightened colour, talked furiously. Under the strain of impending disaster, she brought all her strength and courage to the surface. Her eyes, under the shadow of her tawny hair, betrayed no sign of the fear in her heart. She wondered if she had been wise in asking him to stay. He had threatened her so mysteriously. Did he mean to make some sudden, melodramatic announcement to her husband? And yet if she had let him go she would be bound to meet defeat. This way there was still a chance at least that some plan might come to her mind, some means of saving herself from his cruel and needless bigotry. She noted

the pleasant air of her home more keenly than ever before, and then thought of this crisis which was come to break her peace and shatter her contentment.

After dinner George Trench smoked a cigar with his paper before him. Very quietly Abraham Storch sat watching the woman. She was tense with worry, seeking vaguely some expedient, some idea. But no idea came; her mind was troubled and bewildered as in delirium. If she could only get him alone—

Suddenly she saw that he had risen.

"I am very tired; I should like to retire," he said. Before she could answer he had turned with a curt "good-night," and stepped heavily towards the stairway.

"Odd stick!" ejaculated George Trench, and rustled over his paper to a new page.

Over the rim of it he caught a glance of his wife's distraught face.

"What's the matter, dear? Are you ill?"

"Oh, no. I didn't sleep well last night, I guess. I'm—I'm a little exhausted," Gloria answered with a faint smile.

But her pulses were pounding as she wondered what Abraham Storch was planning. Something in his walk, something in his voice, had plainly signified a definite determination. And yet she could not intercept him without revealing what she was fighting so desperately to keep hidden. She could only wait and hope.

IV

When he had left them, Storch moved quickly in the direction of the room a maid had previously assigned him. He entered in the darkness and shut the door. Then he made his way to a window and for a time stood there lost in thought. Suddenly he sank to his knees and began to pray audibly. Queer scraps of sound echoed in the apartment, a voice of crazed entreaty and despair. At last he got upon his feet and shook his shoulders as if ready for some definite action.

He fumbled along the wall for the switch, but in a moment he fell against a writing-desk in the corner. He went no further, but sat down in the darkness and drew a sheet of paper near him. His fingers closed upon a pen and he uncorked an ink bottle.

Then he began to write. It was only three or four minutes before he threw down his pen and went back to the window. For a moment he stood there silently. The next he gave a little sound of desperation, plunged his hand into his pocket and drew out a small, cylindrical bottle. He tossed the contents into his throat.

As he swayed there, with the poison numbing nerves and heart, a swift spasm of fear came over him. The confession that he had written and left so carelessly—into whose hands would it fall? Some servant who might be bribed, or, perhaps, even the woman herself!

He wheeled about, stumbled and fell. Fighting a deadly nausea, fighting the agony of his aching limbs, he dragged himself inch by inch across the floor. The lines deepened in his face and he wept softly as he battled to carry out his will.

In a minute he had reached the desk, feverishly lifted himself, thrust the confession into a stray envelope and scrawled a superscription upon it: "For the police." Surely a servant would not attempt to tamper with that. His work was done.

With the pen in his fingers, Storch dropped to his knees. With a little tremor the body straightened out and was still.

V

The scream of a horrified maid was not necessary to awaken Gloria. She had not slept all night. When she reached the door, her husband, always an early riser, was already there. On the threshold she threw a single glance within. The stiffened body, the pen

still gripped in the fingers, the envelope on the desk, told the story in full.

If she could only get in quietly and somehow destroy that evidence. But her husband was already there, staring down at the body. Even as she looked she saw his glance rise to the desk and his hand go out towards it.

She closed her eyes and leaned back weakly. And then, as if from very far away, she heard a voice:

"He's written something! See here! What's this? The paper's blank. By Jove, the ink-bottle was empty. He must have written—in the dark!"

Gloria went down to the floor in a faint.

FROM A "GLAD" BOOK

By Burton Knisely

I

IN the dish were two apples.
One was much the larger and glossier.
Cunningly I picked it.
It was rotten at the bottom.

II

With a submissive half-smile that spoke volumes, I replaced it and took the smaller apple.
It, too, was rotten at the bottom.

A WOMAN is a book written in a dozen languages, and the man who can read them all is called a misogynist.

A GIRL'S kisses are like pickles in a bottle. The first is hard to get, but the rest come easy.

IF you want to know what a woman thinks of this or that, don't listen to her: look at her.

MORALS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

A ONE-ACT PLAY

By Bertram Bloch

THIS is a play about the Lucullus Farringtons. It may be a bit unfair to drag the Lucullus Farringtons into the pitiless glare of publicity—that is, this kind of publicity—and it must be admitted that the reactions to the various events of the story would probably have been the same had these events transpired in the lives of Mr. Cornelius Paramount and his wife, or Lord and Lady Castle, or even, let it be whispered, had they occurred in the lives of Mr. and Mrs. John Smith, which is to say, you and me. But the Fates have chosen the Lucullus Farringtons, and we must abide their choice.

Let us then walk into the glass-enclosed porch of the Farringtons' country house. It is a glorious day, and the warm sunlight is just right for basking. But the Lucullus Farringtons are in no mood for basking this day. There is sterner business before them. . . . Mr. Lucullus Farrington is talking. Mr. Lucullus Farrington is a short, spare man with a checked waistcoat and eyebrows so big and fuzzy that they look for all the world like two caterpillars asleep on his forehead. Mrs. Lucullus Farrington, to whom Mr. Lucullus Farrington is talking, is plump, with the benign plumpness of a woman who has never had to worry. She is knitting, but listening intently, nevertheless, for she greatly respects her husband's opinions.

FARRINGTON

(*He is greatly shocked.*) And she remained there from midnight until one in the morning?

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*She, too, is shocked, but this only makes her knit the faster.*) Until ten minutes past one. Exactly an hour and ten minutes. Cook had her clock beside her the whole time. Cook is so conscientious.

FARRINGTON

It is outrageous! In a respectable household!

MRS. FARRINGTON

And we have set them such a good example. If we were fast like the Perrys—

FARRINGTON

(*Pointing a forefinger at his wife.*) Haven't I always said that there must be something wrong with Barr? When a chauffeur is as honest and as efficient as he is—look out! It isn't natural, it isn't human. . . . But that settles it. I'm through with his kind. I'd rather have a man who'd steal a little, than one who will seduce my maids—

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*Shocked.*) Oh, Lucullus!

FARRINGTON

(*Misunderstanding her.*) Yes, I would. Do you think I put money above morals?

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*Hastening to explain.*) Oh, no,

Lucullus. I was—surprised at your language.

FARRINGTON

I said seduce. Well, isn't it seduction? Don't be a prude, my dear. Not at your time of life. It sounds conceited. . . . (*He waves his arms.*) Have you spoken to either of them yet?

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*Reproachfully.*) Before speaking to *you*, Lucullus? You know I wouldn't do that. Besides, I'm afraid if we don't speak to them in the right way, they'll leave.

FARRINGTON

(*His eye-brows bobbing up and down as though they were getting ready to jump over his head.*) Leave? Leave! I should hope they *would* leave! The immoral creatures! (*He sees that his wife is not in agreement with him, and he is surprised and shocked.*) My dear! Do you mean to tell me that you want them to stay?

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*Humbly, but honestly.*) It's easy enough for *you* to talk. *You* don't have the trouble of getting new servants. . . . We'll never get such good ones again—not way out here in the country.

FARRINGTON

But common decency demands—

MRS. FARRINGTON

I can't see what discharging them is going to do for common decency— It will just give them a chance to continue to be immoral elsewhere. Yes, it will. And just think, if they were immoral here in our home, how immoral they'll be in a home that isn't as respectable as ours. . . .

FARRINGTON

(*Rubbing his chin.*) There is something in what you say, my dear.

MRS. FARRINGTON

Thank you, Lucullus.

FARRINGTON

But common decency demands that we do *something*. We can't permit a think like this to go on. . . .

MRS. FARRINGTON

They must get married. That is the only decent solution.

FARRINGTON

(*All smiles.*) Why, of course. That's been at the back of my mind, too. I don't know why I didn't think of it just now. Marriage is the customary end to such affairs. The girl becomes respectable again; the man is punished for his crime. A very, very laudable thing. The only thing, in fact. . . . I must speak to them at once. I am glad we thought of that.

MRS. FARRINGTON

I thought of marriage instantly—naturally. Only I hesitated because Mabel is engaged to that young telegraph operator down at the station.

FARRINGTON

(*In airy surprise.*) And you let that weigh for a moment? The young telegraph operator must look elsewhere for a bride. Surely, my dear, you would not let him marry Mabel now? Speaking plainly, and this is a time for plain speaking, Mabel is, well, if not exactly damaged goods, at least, considerably soiled. . . . It would be a wrong, a gross wrong, to let this young telegraph operator marry Mabel. No, she has chosen. Let her abide by her choice. I shall soon convince her that this is the only respectable, moral, ethical thing to do.

MRS. FARRINGTON

It must all be done quietly, Lucullus. Remember, we have two young girls in the house, one of whom, at least, is very innocent.

FARRINGTON

You mean Alice?

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*Coldly.*) I do not, Lucullus. Your

niece is charming, but hardly innocent. I was referring to your daughter.

FARRINGTON

But—but wasn't it Ethel who told you of this—business?

MRS. FARRINGTON

Yes, cook told her, and she came and cried in my lap. She is such an innocent child. . . . That is why men do not seem to take to her. Men, I have found, do not admire innocence in a woman. . . .

FARRINGTON

(*Eyeing her suspiciously.*) May I ask, my dear, if there is anything personal in that?

[*His question is never answered. The French windows are opened and a young girl comes through. She is thin and sallow, pretty in a colourless way, but lacking in personality. She is the sort of person you forget three minutes after you have met her.*]

ETHEL

Oh, mother— (*She drops to her knees and buries her head in her mother's lap.*)

MRS. FARRINGTON

Ethel, you will ruin my dress. . . What is the matter, child?

ETHEL

(*Her head still buried.*) Mother—cook has just found out that she made a mistake.

FARRINGTON

A mistake! What do you mean, a mistake?

ETHEL

Mabel didn't go to Barr's room last night. . . .

(*She hides her head again.*)

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*A bit pompously.*) I thought as . . . Is that anything to cry about? I am ashamed of you.

FARRINGTON

(*A bit pompously.*) I thought as much. . . . A thing like that couldn't happen in this house. There's a whole lot in the saying, like master like man. . . .

ETHEL

(*Looking up.*) I don't think you understand.

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*Pushing her aside.*) There, look at that stain. That's the second dress this morning you have wet with your tears. I wish you wouldn't be so emotional. . . .

ETHEL

(*Genuinely distressed.*) I'm sorry, mother, but—but it's so terrible. . . .

FARRINGTON

What is so terrible?

ETHEL

(*Blushing furiously.*) I can't say it with you here, father. . . . Please go away.

FARRINGTON

(*Suddenly frightened.*) Ethel, you haven't done anything—?

ETHEL

Oh, no, no. How could you think anything like that, father? Oh, mother! (*She throws her arms about her mother and weeps afresh.*)

MRS. FARRINGTON

My poor child. (*She glares at Farrington.*) Lucullus, words fail me. . . . Please, Ethel, you are getting my neck wet.

ETHEL

(*Sobbing.*) I can't help it. . . .

FARRINGTON

Be sensible, child. . . . I am your father, the author of your being. Anything you can say before your mother, you can say before me. . . .

ETHEL

It—it wasn't Mabel was in Barr's room. . . . It was Cousin Alice.

[*The Farringtons are stunned. They stare at each other, trying to talk, but*

finding no words. At last Farrington breaks the terrible silence.]

FARRINGTON

Alice! Your cousin Alice!

ETHEL

Ye-es.

FARRINGTON

(*Pointing into the garden, where a fair-haired girl is lying in the sun.*) But it can't be! She is there. And she has been singing all morning!

MRS. FARRINGTON

Even sinners sing, Lucullus.

FARRINGTON

I couldn't if *I* had sinned

MRS. FARRINGTON

The brazen, wicked, sinful child to lie there among those pure and innocent flowers, when she knows—when she knows—that she has—

FARRINGTON

Ethel, retire. . . .

MRS. FARRINGTON

But not into the garden, child. . . . Go to the library . . . or better still, go down to the village and see the pictures. . . .

ETHEL

Yes, mother. (*She goes, crying the while.*)

FARRINGTON

(*Looking out into the garden, frowning so severely that the caterpillars seem in danger of falling off.*) Hmp! (*And then after a moment*) Hmph!

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*With the little glow of satisfaction that even the best of us feel when our prophecies are fulfilled.*) I don't like to boast, Lucullus, but haven't I always said that that girl would come to no good? With such a father and such a mother—

FARRINGTON

Don't speak unkindly of the dead, my dear.

MRS. FARRINGTON

I never do, Lucullus. You know I never talk about anybody. But I can't help thinking about them. They led such wicked lives, and then died before anything happened to them. I always knew that somebody would be punished for what they had done. If not, what is the use of being good? That's what I want to know. What is the use of being good, if you're not punished for being bad?

FARRINGTON

You are right, my dear, unquestionably right.

MRS. FARRINGTON

So this doesn't surprise me in the least. My mother's heart trembled within me when you brought that girl here.

FARRINGTON

What else could I do, my dear—my own brother's child?

MRS. FARRINGTON

You could do nothing else. I realized that, but I prayed that our Ethel would be engaged before Alice got here. But Fate decided otherwise and now—(*She breaks off.*) Look, look, Lucullus! (*They stare out into the garden.*) She is turning a somersault! Look at those legs! What can you expect from a girl with legs like a chorus girl? (*Turning on her husband.*) Lucullus, this cannot go on. What are you going to do?

FARRINGTON

(*Dismally.*) I had forgotten that we were face to face with a situation. . . . If only cook hadn't seen her! . . .

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*Shocked.*) You would want this to go on? I am ashamed of you, Lucullus.

FARRINGTON

No, no, no! You misunderstand me. If one of us had seen her, we could take more time to think it over. . . . (*He shakes his head sadly.*) Why wasn't it

Mabel? We had it all so nicely arranged.

MRS. FARRINGTON

For the sake of the telegraph operator I am glad it wasn't Mabel.

FARRINGTON

Yes, yes, but all our plans! We would have been doing such a moral deed if we had made Mabel marry Barr. . . . She would have been made respectable, he would have been punished. But now—now what can we do?

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*Sighing.*) If she could be made to marry Barr, it would be no more than she deserved.

FARRINGTON

My dear! I am surprised. Have you no family pride? And, after all, she is our niece!

MRS. FARRINGTON

I know, I know. . . . (*She sighs again.*) What is the world coming to? When we were young immorality was confined almost entirely to stage people. And now—

FARRINGTON

(*Impatiently.*) Nonsense! There were immoral women thousands of years ago.

MRS. FARRINGTON

But not chauffeurs, Lucullus.

FARRINGTON

Ssh! Ssh! I think I have it. (*There is a silence.*) Cook must be paid to keep quiet. . . . Barr—(*He sighs*) must be sent away. I know it seems unjust, that we should suffer for Alice's wrongdoing, but the rain, you know, falls alike on the just and the unjust. Barr must go.

MRS. FARRINGTON

It makes one wonder if it pays to be good.

FARRINGTON

Alice, we must keep here for the present.

MRS. FARRINGTON

Here? In the same house with us and Ethel—

FARRINGTON

We can send Ethel away.

MRS. FARRINGTON

Send Ethel away? Have you taken leave of your senses, Lucullus?

FARRINGTON

Please, let me finish. Alice we must keep under our eyes, so this—this sort of thing is not repeated. And we must get her married as soon as possible.

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*Seeing the wisdom of this.*) Why, of course, we must. . . . That is just the thing to do. . . . And we must hurry before this leaks out.

FARRINGTON

You said not long ago that old Wilkins and the Townsend boy were rivals for her hand—

MRS. FARRINGTON

Let her marry old Wilkins. He is a disgusting creature. She ought to be punished in some way.

FARRINGTON

I heartily agree with you.

MRS. FARRINGTON

Ah!

FARRINGTON

What is it, my dear?

MRS. FARRINGTON

I have just thought that Wilkins will probably die soon and then she will be a young and wealthy widow. Is there no justice on earth?

FARRINGTON

I think we had better leave the dealing out of justice to God, my dear. We don't seem to be very successful at it. [*There is a knock at the windows.*]

FARRINGTON

Come.

[*A lithe young man in the uniform of a chauffeur enters.*]

MRS. FARRINGTON

Oh, it's you, Barr.

BARR

(*Smiling.*) Good-morning.

FARRINGTON

(*Gruffly.*) Good-morning. What do you want?

BARR

I have come to give notice, sir.

FARRINGTON

To—to do what?

BARR

To give notice. I'll have to leave you, sir, in a week, and I thought you'd like a little time to get someone else.

MRS. FARRINGTON

But why are you going to leave, Barr? We have been well satisfied. . . .

BARR

Thank you, ma'am, but you see, I must get back to my work.

FARRINGTON

Your work? You are not clear, Barr.

BARR

I'm sorry. I'll explain. Running a car isn't my profession. I am doing it on a bet.

FARRINGTON

Running our car on a bet?

BARR

You see—I'm the vice-president of the Pan-American Trading Company. My father, Raymond Barr, founded the company, you see. Not so long ago, at one of our meetings, one of the directors and myself got into a scrap. He is a self-made man, I'm a father-made man. He said that I wouldn't be able to earn five dollars a week if left to my own resources. I bet him that I could. When vacation time came, I got this job with you. . . . I think I have won my bet. . . .

FARRINGTON

Well, well! H'm! Well, what do you think of that, my dear?

MRS. FARRINGTON

I have always said that there was something—something unchauffeurish about Mr. Barr.

FARRINGTON

(*Nodding.*) That's so. And haven't I been saying that it's unnatural for a chauffeur to be so honest and efficient?

BARR

Will you want the car this afternoon, Mrs. Farrington?

FARRINGTON

Oh, I couldn't think of asking you, Mr. Barr—

BARR

Please don't feel that way about it. Until you get someone else I am in your employ. . . .

FARRINGTON

(*Laughing.*) Of course, of course. Mr. Barr wants to play the game out. Very well, Mr. Barr. Bring the car around as usual then.

BARR

Thank you, sir. (*He goes. There is an ominous silence.*)

MRS. FARRINGTON

It's a strange world, isn't it, Lucullus?

FARRINGTON

H'm. Pan-American Trading Company—vice-president. H'm. . . .

MRS. FARRINGTON

He is such a nice young man.

FARRINGTON

(*Suddenly.*) Nice young man! Hmph! That reminds me. We mustn't forget about him and Alice. That wasn't such a nice thing to do. Hmph! He'll marry her for that. Eh?

MRS. FARRINGTON

I suppose he ought to.

FARRINGTON

Ought to? He must. It's the only decent thing for him to do. Good Lord!

A man can't go about ruining women—He'll have to marry her. It is the decent thing for him to do. That is what they always do if they are gentlemen.

MRS. FARRINGTON

And for being wicked she will be rewarded with a rich, handsome husband.

FARRINGTON

Didn't I suggest before, my dear, that we leave rewards and punishments to God?

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*She has been staring into the garden.*) Look! He is going to her. . . . She is calling him! See how she raises her arms. She is kissing him. Lucullus, stop them! Stop them or I must go inside! . . . Thank Heaven, he is leaving her. Did you ever see anything so brazen? Kissing each other right in the sunlight.

FARRINGTON

They do make a good-looking couple.

MRS. FARRINGTON

Good-looking cou— (*She breaks off as an idea comes to her.*) Lucullus, Lucullus!

FARRINGTON

What is it?

MRS. FARRINGTON

Lucullus, she has inveigled him into this. She learned who he was, and she inveigled him. Remember, Lucullus, that she went to his room, not he to hers. . . . (*She throws back her head triumphantly.*)

FARRINGTON

H'm. So she did, so she did.

MRS. FARRINGTON

And you would make that poor boy a victim of her schemes. You know that I am not lax in my moral principles, but even I am willing to forgive a man when the girl forces herself upon him.

FARRINGTON

Yes, there is something in that.

MRS. FARRINGTON

It would be terrible to let her capture him in her net that way.

FARRINGTON

I—I can't quite believe that Alice would be guilty of such a scheme.

MRS. FARRINGTON

Lucullus, every girl schemes to win a man. Some more, some less. Some innocently, some not so innocently. Some by merely putting a rose in their hair, or by wearing a pretty dress; some by shrewder schemes. There is nothing wrong in trying to attract a man. Only when a girl uses the means Alice has employed she should not be permitted to succeed.

FARRINGTON

But they have done wrong, my dear, and only marriage will set them right. Common decency demands that.

MRS. FARRINGTON

There is something above common decency. Justice. It would be unjust to let her succeed, and it would also be unjust to make that poor boy miserable for the rest of his days.

FARRINGTON

But what are we to do, my dear?

MRS. FARRINGTON

We must separate them as soon as possible. Mr. Barr is going to remain here until we get someone else, therefore Alice must go.

FARRINGTON

We can let Barr go now, and hire someone from the village temporarily.

MRS. FARRINGTON

No. Alice must go. She must not be permitted to remain in the same house with our daughter. She is not a fit companion for Ethel.

FARRINGTON

But where is she to go?

MRS. FARRINGTON

That sweet, innocent little Gladys

Tolliver has been begging her to spend a month with them. Let her go there. And the sooner the better, Lucullus.

FARRINGTON

I don't see why you are so set on getting her away—

MRS. FARRINGTON

Please, Lucullus, be guided by me in this. Call her now. I'll help her pack her things, and Ethel can use the car alone this afternoon.

[*Farrington goes to the window.*]

FARRINGTON

Alice! (*A voice answers.*) Come here a moment. . . . She is coming.

MRS. FARRINGTON

Don't be too severe on her, Lucullus. Merely just.

FARRINGTON

You may depend on me, my dear.

[*They wait for* ALICE *to come. She comes. We already know that her hair is golden, and that she is trimly built. Her colour is high; her eyes are alive. All in all, she is a very handsome girl.*]

ALICE

You called me, uncle.

FARRINGTON

I know it. (*There is a pause.*) Alice, I have a painful task ahead of me.

ALICE

Can I help you, uncle?

FARRINGTON

You can help indeed. Alice, you were in Mr. Barr's room last night for one hour—

MRS. FARRINGTON

An hour and ten minutes.

FARRINGTON

An hour and ten minutes, after the family had gone to bed.

ALICE

Yes, I was—

FARRINGTON

(*Interrupting her.*) Please. I'll do the talking. You answer questions. . . . What did you—

MRS. FARRINGTON

Lucullus! Remember I am present.

ALICE

You want to know why I went there?

MRS. FARRINGTON

We do not.

ALICE

It isn't anything I can't tell you. We were looking over hotel ads.

MRS. FARRINGTON

Hotel ads?

ALICE

Yes, trying to decide on an itinerary for our honeymoon.

FARRINGTON

You are going to marry Mr. Barr?

ALICE

No—

MRS. FARRINGTON

(*Triumphantly.*) Ah!

FARRINGTON

You are not going to marry him, and yet you plan—

ALICE

I married him a week ago last Tuesday. I thought you wouldn't like me to marry a chauffeur, so we kept it secret.

MRS. FARRINGTON

But he is not a chauffeur.

ALICE

So I have learned since. Isn't it delightful?

FARRINGTON

Yes. . . . I am very glad, my dear. I have always known you were a fine girl. (*He kisses her.*)

ALICE

Thank you. I'm glad to hear you say

that. I've been afraid you didn't trust me—

FARRINGTON

Nonsense, my dear, why shouldn't we trust you?

MRS. FARRINGTON

You do your uncle an injustice. . . . I sometimes didn't trust you, but all that is past now. I am very glad. (ALICE *looks at her doubtfully.*) Yes, I am. Even if I don't altogether approve of you, I am glad. (*They kiss each other warmly.*)

ALICE

May I go now? I promised Ted I'd meet him in ten minutes.

FARRINGTON

Yes, go. (*She goes and he waves his hand after her.*)

MRS. FARRINGTON

I am glad it has turned out this way, only— Look, look at the way she picks up her dress to jump the hedge. Where, I ask you, is there justice on this earth?

CURTAIN

TWO MET

By George Sterling

YOU came, and Mystery murmured in the wood;
You spoke: a dryad ventured from her tree;
Or was it that my fancy could but see
The sweet incredible and found my mood
Demanding the impossible for food?
I know that both were softly granted me,
When, like a goddess on her devotee,
You smiled, and joy was made the only good.

For us had Silence made the dusk a shrine;
For us had needles fallen from the pine;
For us had come that wind from out the South,
Wafting your loosened hair across my face,
As I, oblivious of time and space,
Turned to your fragrance and consenting mouth.

THE worst kiss is delightful if only one gets it unexpectedly, unlawfully, and behind the door.

CLOSE-UPS

By June Gibson

I

I DREAMED of a snug little home with Frank, far from the cares of the clattering world.

He proposed. . . .

Suddenly, I pictured Mission furniture and the odour of boiling turnips.

II

I dreamed of idling before a huge fireplace while Howard told me of his astronomic discoveries.

He proposed. . . .

I pictured rubbers and a hot-water bottle.

III

I dreamed of the envy of my friends if I married Harold, who was so handsome that women blushed when he entered the room.

He proposed. . . .

I pictured pacing the drawing-room, already two hours late, waiting while Harold trimmed his moustache.

IV

I hope Jerry does not propose. . . .

I have a sneaking suspicion that Jerry wears union-suits.

INCOMPATIBILITY

By Mary MacMillan

ALL I like is a little house
With a garden of flowers and an apple tree,
With a hill behind and the sky above,
And a hearth with a fire for me.

You want a palace with carved oak chairs,
With crystal and gold and tapestry,
With waiting men and brilliant lights,
And a throng for company.

You face the sun, I face the moon,
There's a twisted cord from you to me,
A knotted cord, and, oh, my dear,
Love is captivity.

A KISS FOR THE BISHOP

By Gertrude Brooke Hamilton

I

THE weather was sparkling, and had been for weeks. The sun shone unceasingly, the breezes along the Drive brimmed with effervescent suggestions, and the river below the Drive dimpled like the back of a naughty *danseuse*.

For weeks, in her costly and decorous apartment, Carène, the young wife of Pompey Gilfoil, had been out of temper. Life moved with such inevitable precision and seemliness in Pompey's domain! Stevens, the serving-man, Witherspoon, Carène's maid, and Paulton, the chauffeur, all reflected Pompey's adherence to the conventions and proprieties. The weather had never been known to disturb a feature of Pompey Gilfoil's handsome countenance.

Carène loved her big husband. But, *que voulez-vous?* The young wife was of French origin and had wine for blood—a great-great aunt, a little *duchesse*, had drunk so dizzily of sweet waters that the sad little tale of her life was quite intoxicating. Carène was fond of thinking the little *duchesse*, long dead, accountable for the fizziness in her own colourful veins.

Carène sat in a window-seat overlooking the sunny Drive and dimpling river. Her lips seemed framed for a kiss deepened by *ennui* and lightened by perversity. As there was no one about but Witherspoon, upon whom such a kiss would be wasted, the lips drooped—and Carène fingered the tassel of the window-shade, pensively. She wondered how she might spend the afternoon and avoid weariness of spirit. There were several things that the wife of Pompey Gilfoil, banker and paragon, might do: she might order the limousine and have Paulton drive her down the Avenue, among fleets of other cars, all subservient to white-gloved hands of traffic policemen; or she might have Witherspoon array her in her violet velvet and sables for an hour of idling at the Ritz-Carlton with some dear feminine *chatte*, furred in equal lustre; or she might drink tea at home, with Stevens at the tea-cart. There were several things she might do—while the giddy gold of the afternoon turned to purple in the western sky, behind the Park and the river!

She did not care for the things she might do.

So she stayed on the window-seat, and thought of her dead little *duchesse* and true Parisian headiness. Her own escapades and follies, being untouched by the mellowness of antiquity, simmered flatly in comparison with the sins of her great-great aunt. Yet, *gage d'amour!*—Carène had misdemeanours to tabulate! There were incidents, trivial enough to mean nothing, *outré* enough to threaten breakage, in the secret gardens of her very modern soul. Playing with the tassel of the window-shade, her lips, again, framed for kissing. Had the breeze that blew out the curtains of corn-coloured silk been a lover, how lucky the breeze.

Witherspoon appeared between the portières with a corded florist's box held against her sateen bosom.

"Flowers, Mrs. Gilfoil," she said, moving forward like a figure in a wooden Noah's Ark.

Carène untied the gold cord of the box. Pompey liked her to wear a din-

ner *corsage*. There was a note from him attached to the orchids. Repressing a sigh, and thinking of husbands, Carène perused Pompey's nice message.

"*Dear Carène*," Pompey had written from the florist's, "*Wear these to-night and look your loveliest, for I will bring a Bishop home to dinner.*

"*Devotedly, Pomp.*"

She handed the orchids to Witherspoon.

"A Bishop," she sighed; "on such an evening!"

Witherspoon put the flowers in water.

"They are lovely, Mrs. Gilfoil," she said.

"A comfortably conversable dignitary, with an eye for the roast and a smile for the wine-glasses!" the slight voice sighed. "How Pomp dotes on misfits with the weather. The sun never sets gold over the river, Witherspoon, but what a clerical, or a judge, comes home with my husband."

"Shall you wear your white satin gown to-night, Mrs. Gilfoil?" Witherspoon inquired.

"No," snapped Carène, "my brandywine chiffon. Go away, Wither. You disgust me. *Ca ennui à la fin!* A wooden servitor! Do go away."

The corn-coloured curtains blew out all about Carène, like clouds of anger. Shrugging, she leaned from the window and watched the world below—the Drive, with its small people and tall trees and squat shrubbery, and its tiers of stone steps going down to the water; the long, shimmering river, prismatic in the late afternoon, and shot by golden paths, as the sun wended westward.

Witherspoon, in a room of the apartment, laid out the white satin frock and its chaste accessories.

When the paths of gold on the river were beginning to lengthen, Carène gave herself over to the hands of her maid. In white satin embroidered with gold, with orchids at her belt and a slim band of gold binding her blonde hair, the young wife of Pompey Gilfoil resembled a lily with gold calyx. Only her lips betrayed the wine in her veins.

She was at the piano, running melodies, when Pompey came in with his dinner-guest. Often as Pompey came in, either alone or with guests, Carène was impressed anew by his handsome proportions, bordering on lovable clumsiness. Her fingers lifted from the ivories, as Pompey came the length of the drawing-room, with his Bishop in tow.

The Bishop was tall and young—and all that he should be. He possessed the brow of an orator and the profile of an ascetic. Grey eyes and raven hair rendered him not unpicturesque. His manner was remote and shy toward a bare-shouldered sylph with orchids at her belt.

It evolved, at the candle-shaded dinner table, that Pompey had captured a cherry-blossom dignitary — Abelard Madrigal, Bishop of Kyu-shu, an island in South Japan. With the toneless accuracy of a coolie loading a coal-ship, Bishop Madrigal entertained his host by tales of Buddha-worshippers, of mystical faiths and cults, of temples and pagodas, of flowery customs and Eastern prejudices. With the same delicate monotony, the Bishop consumed his soup, his entrée, his beef, his salad and his demi-tasse. Carène traced the damask of the cloth with the tip of her coffee-spoon. *Tiens!* How stupid to be a young saint, in far Japan! She lighted a cigarette, and blew rings of perfumed smoke, to form a chain of halos for the head of her husband's guest.

Pompey in no way shared her humour. In the candlelight, the banker's slightly rubicund face was attentive and interested. Pompey liked to sit at his dinner table, with his lovely young wife opposite, and listen to pleasant discourse. His cigar smoke ascended in a solid spiral of melliferous vapour.

Beyond the windows of the apartment, a moon was rising over the river and the stars were little worlds a-whirl. In the drawing-room, corn-coloured curtains blew out to the night. *La belle nuit!* Carène finished her cigarette. She arose. Fingering a white velvet

neck-ribbon, on which a medallion swung, she led Pompey and the Bishop of Kyu-shu into the room overlooking the moon-flooded Park and river. Pompey asked her to sing for them. Mobile face and moonshine hair reflected in a mirror over the piano, she sang, with her thoughts pirouetting somewhere in the silvery night:

"L'on se fait souvent mille promesses,
Les femmes nous grisent de mots fous. . . .
Mais qu'importe puisque leurs caresses
Nous font passer des instants si doux!"

Her voice might have been that of the little *duchesse*, singing down over the years of bitter-sweet ebullitions. She drifted from one frothy song to another. Her husband gave her courteous and appreciative attention. The Bishop appeared oblivious to such enchanting cherry-blossoms of sound; standing on the hearth-rug with his feet planted firmly and his regular profile turned toward the fire.

The telephone tinkled in the hall.

Stevens moved from the rear of the apartment, and, a second later, hovered about the door of the drawing-room, discreetly summoning his master.

Pompey excused himself, strolling out to the hall and taking the telephone receiver into his big grasp with his glance going back toward the music-lamp. He uttered the conventional "Yes?" A moment of listening brought a shade of concern to his countenance.

"I'll be with you directly, Doctor," he said, and hung up the receiver with a rather hurried hand.

His return to the drawing-room was marked by some perturbation.

"Mother has suffered another seizure, Carène," he explained.

He spoke to the Bishop: "My mother, who lives across town, is subject to heart attacks. When they overtake her, the doctor usually summons her children to her bedside. There are five of us Gilfoils; we meet at mother's house once in every few weeks. A mother is pretty precious, you know."

Anxiety puckering his attractive face, Pompey turned again to Carène. "I'll depend on you to take care of Bishop Madrigal for an hour or two, dear. You know how it is. I must go to mother."

The Bishop was sympathetic.

"I lost my mother when very young," he said to Pompey, with his rapid and colourless intonation. "Go at once. I trust you will find no cause for real alarm."

"Give the *belle-mère* my love, Pomp," said Carène, from the piano-bench.

Carène was inclined to grimace over the not infrequent seizures of her mother-in-law's heart: being very old, in a decadent and magnificent residence across town, Mrs. Muney Gilfoil, mother of five, was prone to manœuvres of the heart when she wished to see her children!

"*Au revoir*, my adored *lourdard*," smiled Carène, as Pompey took his overcoat and stick from Stevens.

II

THERE lay before Carène, at the end of a temper-tinged day, the task of entertaining the Bishop of Kyu-shu. Her spirit was yawning—and her mouth was downcast—as she sat on the piano-bench, with a ringed hand on each side of her and the mirror reflecting her sheened hair and shoulders.

The Bishop had, also, a yawn in his eyes—it was obvious that any of his choice stories of missions and mystics might fall on cold ground. He appeared embarrassed and distant, as he kept his place on the hearth-rug and twirled his thin young thumbs.

They conversed of Japan and Manhattan. She inquired about mammoth gods with real gold eyes and Mona Lisa smiles; and he spoke, with some asperity, of the gods of modern Babylon, of gold, and affixed smiles. Their stilted, and divided, converse chilled the atmosphere of the roseate room. From a desire to yawn, Carène passed to an impulse to voice a dainty oath.

"*Nom de Dieu!*" she exclaimed, under her breath, "it is outrageous to be young and saintly!"

The window-curtains swayed rhythmically in the night breezes, and straying moonlight mingled with the fire-glow and lampshine of the drawing-room. From the river, came sounds of passing boats. From the Drive, arose the whir and swish of passing motor-cars. How the moon must be winking at the world! Carène said, of the Bishop's twiddling fingers:

"If you get tired of turning your thumbs in one direction, it lessens the labour to turn them in the other direction, Monseigneur Madrigal."

The Bishop started, and looked down at his thumbs.

"I beg your pardon!" he ejaculated, with a gleam of humour.

"*C'est tout pardonner*," murmured Carène, twiddling her own pretty thumbs.

The sounds of the night outside grew elusively emphatic—they seemed to come into the room and frolic there, like a carnival crowd in Nice, throwing confetti and laughing. With a movement of involuntary youth, Carène jumped up and went to a window that opened on a balcony with a view of the river.

"Has your Japan any more ethereal sight than the Hudson strung with fairy lights?" she cried, as she parted the silk curtains and widened the window. "See, the lights dance on the water, the water makes music for the lights."

The curtains blew on each side of her.

"How sad that there should be any old souls to-night!" she said, dreamily.

Swept by a touch of night-worship, by a flicker of temper, she rather discourteously turned her shoulder on Pompey's guest, and stepped out to the window-balcony. She leaned there, her cheek upon her hand, rapt as Juliet on her love-balcony.

The Bishop was young enough to join in her night-worship. His step out to the balcony was devoid of self-consciousness. He stood by the rail, looking at the view. "Yet," he said, seriously, "cannot the old souls appreciate God's beauty, too?"

She shuddered. "Let me die before I mouth and mumble my appreciation of the moon!"

"That is a wrong way to look at old age, which is the golden end of youth," quietly.

"An end, indeed! *A Dieu ne plaise!*" She lifted shivering hands, and the shiver, by chance, untied the bow of the white velvet ribbon on which her medallion swung. With a soft slide, the ornament—an ivory miniature of the little dead *duchesse*—fell from the velvet strand to the street, far below.

Carène caught after her medallion, bending forward, and gazing down through the moonlight.

"Ah, my trinket! *mon joujou!* It is gone!"

The Bishop peered over the balcony.

"No!" he cried. "I see it on the pavement! It lies near the gutter. I will get it for you."

He stepped through the window into the room, with a long stride.

"I would be heartbroken to lose it," declared Carène, following him, and catching up a cloak from the hall, as she passed through.

They descended to the street, by way of the mirrored elevator—and the Bishop, who was sure he had located the medallion from the balcony, poked with his foot over a particular portion of the pavement.

"I am positive that it fell here," he consoled her. "We shall find it."

"I feel that she is lost," responded Carène, desolate. "You know," hesitantly, "she *was* lost—*la petite*. She fell almost into the gutter. *Ah, ma pauvre duchesse!*" Her satin toe followed in the wake of the Bishop's toe, over the half-dark pavement.

She saw the medallion lying near the gutter, as the Bishop, inadvertantly took a forward step, and crushed the trinket to atoms with his heel.

"*Hélas!*" she sighed, fatalistic.

She graciously covered his dismay.

"It could not be helped. Let us pick up what is left."

She stooped to gather the flecks of painted ivory and the pearl case of the miniature.

The Bishop showed chagrin at what he had done.

"Think of my stepping on your locket!" he cried. "Was it an heirloom?"

He went down on his angular knees to help her recover the fragments.

"It was a picture of my great-great aunt, who, I fancy, often felt a godly heel on her cheek," laughed Carène.

Cupping her hands to receive the ivory remains from his, she looked out to the river, mystical, limitless, with dancing lights along its edges.

"Let us walk down to the water and give *la duchesse* to the waves," she suggested, impulsively.

Cradling the ruined medallion in her palms, she swept across the pavement toward an entrance of the Park where tiers of stone steps led down to the river.

The Bishop kept pace with her.

"There was no excuse for my awkwardness," he said quickly. "An heirloom is a thing that cannot be replaced."

They descended the first flight of steps, and described circles of white concrete to another tier, leading to a pier that ran out to a boathouse.

"The river is divine this evening!" commented Carène, traversing the pier. "What a pity we cannot fly over it, like gulls."

"Yes," answered the Bishop, thoughtfully; "there are times when we long to shed our bodies, and fly free."

"*Ah, mais non!*" expostulated Carène. "What would we do with such horrible, vast freedom? Our flesh imprisons us. It is true. But we are not brave enough to wish ourselves out of prison."

She became meditative. Opening her hand, she stretched it out, full of broken ivory.

"Will you intone the burial-at-sea service, Monseigneur Madrigal?" she asked, without mockery. "We shall consecrate *la petite* to a long rest under the waves."

In the same instant, she closed her hand and indicated a ridge of foam beyond the confines of the pier.

"I'd rather bury her out there," she exclaimed; "it is farther from the shore."

She caught her cloak about her.

"Pompey's motor-boat is moored near by," she told the Bishop. "Let us get it, and consign my little *duchesse* to a wave farthest from the shore!"

Looking not unlike a young angel, shod and cloaked in white, she sped along the pier, to the boathouse. Her flutelike voice summoned the boathouse keeper.

"Mr. Gilfoil's motor, Hemp," she called to the brawny keeper of the boats.

When a cushioned craft rocked up to the pier, she slipped the bits of ivory into a pocket of her cloak, and stepped down into the boat. She took the steering-wheel between her ringed hands, waiting for the Bishop to join her.

A rapid step landed the Bishop in the boat. He seated himself, with his black hair blowing up from his forehead.

"I have never been in a motor-boat before," he remarked, as the craft took the waves.

"What?" cried Carène, incredulous. "Have you never before cut through the water in moonlight? Why, what do they do when the moon shines in Kyu-shu?"

She recalled his renunciative status in life.

"*Tiens!*" she exclaimed. "Hov droll!"

She turned the wheel, and they rode between ridges of foam.

As she ploughed the white waters, her thoughts turned on righteousness and things of heaven.

"Tell me how it feels to be young and saintly," she commanded, with simple curiosity.

The Bishop replied calmly, "I do not know."

"Tell me," her low tone was insis-

tent—"what leads one to goodness? Are some born with holy water in their veins? Had you, Monseigneur, a great-great uncle who fasted in a cell?" She let the boat fly free, between the snowy ridges.

The vessel left in its wake a fleeting path of foam, while, beyond it, the waters were yet to be cut by a moon-burnished prow. On and on, flowed the uncut river ahead of them. The Bishop sat erect in the cushions of the motor-boat. His hair blew up. Particles of water moistened his forehead and mouth, making them glisten. His eyes were young, under their level brows. Once, when the craft danced over a billow, he laughed.

Carène echoed the laugh, in younger cadence.

"We are gulls," she shrugged, against the breeze and spray. "Or are we flying souls? There, ahead! See! White shapes walk on the water! Shall we gain paradise if we ride far enough?"

The vapours drenched and curled her corn-silk hair. Through the floating moisture her eyes shone bluer than either the sky or the river.

She turned to her companion.

"If we were truly riding to paradise—if a little further on we were dashed to pieces or suddenly swallowed up by the river—what would your thoughts be, Monseigneur Madrigal?"

The boat seemed to leap forward under her frail hands.

"What would you think, for instance, if a small accident occurred, if something went wrong with the steering-gear and I lost control of the wheel, if the gods took a notion to annihilate us and overturn the boat? What would you think, if, in reality, those white shapes ahead were our own ghosts, Monseigneur?"

There was a trace of recklessness, of rising excitement, in her accents.

The Bishop appeared very tall in his changeless posture on the cushions.

"I hope," he said, not without a gleam of whimsy, "that I would meet my ghost without quailing."

"You are an *homme règle*," sighed Carène, hands tightening on the wheel. "You have no reason to fear your ghost. But, confess—if oblivion were just ahead, might you not wish your spectre a trifle less orderly? They say, that in the supreme moment when we are to die our whole life passes before us in review, and our inevitable cry is for the thing we have not had, the person we have not been. Tell me," impetuously, "of your life, Monseigneur, —has it had no disorder in it?"

His reply came through increasing foam and wind.

"I cannot say that it has, Mrs. Gilfoil. At least, no personal disorder. My father, who was a missionary to the Cherokee Indians, was massacred, and my mother with him. As a baby, I was half smothered by blood. But I cannot point to any havoc in my own existence."

Carène's vaporous face quickened to an eerie loveliness.

"And have you never eaten of *le pain bénit de la gaîté?*" she inquired, against the breezes.

"I never have," he responded, serenely.

The boat reached the more solitary lengths of the river. The lights on either shore seemed more distant. The moon seemed nearer.

"You are lucky, Monseigneur Madrigal!" cried Carène, bending slightly forward over the wheel and gripping it with waxen fingers. "Few of us have feasted only on holy bread. Few can imagine oblivion, and remain at peace. Take myself—I hope I have no ghost to walk with me on eternal waters! Take my neighbours—it would be the same, I think, with them. Take my husband — would he enjoy trudging eternity beside his Wall Street conscience? Take one who, by now, must have danced æons with her dead self—my little *duchesse, la petite diablesse!* Shall I tell you of her end? She gave herself, her body, you understand, to the waves, Monseigneur. She consigned herself, while still young, to the *reposoir* of the Seine. She had, some time before, run away from her duke

with another titled gentleman, an *homme de salon*, a *roué*, Monseigneur. It seems that she loved this wicked man. For I cherish the last lines that she wrote before going out to the Seine. The message was sent by her lover to the duke, who preserved it. '*Je t'aime*,' she wrote, æons ago. That was all—'*Je t'aime*.'"

The Bishop had scant patience for the tale of *la petite duchesse*.

"Why is it that often the last words of the foolish are cherished, and the last words of the wise are forgotten?" he remarked, briefly.

"You are harsh, *mon ami*," gaily—as the boat flew on. "I remember! You were quick to put your heel on her cheek. Perhaps, you might be more charitable were you less orderly. A touch of foolishness might increase your wisdom."

Her laugh was heady and sweet. The breezes made sails of her swansdown cloak. She was youth incarnate. And white folly. Dazzling flesh, and delectable naughtiness. A little woman of the world.

Abelard Madrigal, Bishop of Kyushu, ascetic young saint, regarded the sprite with undisturbed grey eyes. He was drenched from head to foot by the dews from the ridges of spray. Higher and higher they rose, the snowy, moon-topped ridges. The motor-boat seemed speed-crazy, under the near moon. It whizzed through the waters like an arrow shot from a tipsy hand. Showers of water-drops rained on the Bishop.

Carène's corn-silk head bent lower over the wheel. Suddenly she gave a slight gasp. Pallor flecked her cheeks.

"*Dame!* I was not mistaken!" she murmured, wrenching the wheel.

Her whisper was palpitant, over the whir of the motor:

"For some minutes, Monseigneur Madrigal, I have had no control of the boat. There is something wrong! I cannot manage it!"

She lost her breath, bending to the wheel—in the vapours, her face matched the ivory shoulders from which her cloak slipped.

The Bishop acted quickly.

Instantly, he was tinkering with the motor.

"I know nothing of machinery," he confessed. "Are you sure you have lost control?"

"Yes," said Carène frantically. "I fear we are in danger."

He worked without wisdom, on his knees in the motor-boat.

"I do not understand the mechanism!" he ejaculated. "What a fool I am."

They were far enough up the river to seem nearly alone, and the speed at which the boat was going excluded the possibility of explaining their plight to any craft they might be passing.

"But," said the Bishop, peering at cogs and screws, "there must be some way of stopping us!"

"It would seem so," agreed Carène, intent on the wheel.

The momentum of their flight increased rather than slackened.

"*C'est plus fort que moi!*" she cried, half inaudibly.

From his knees, hands admittedly inadequate, the Bishop looked over the ridges of flying foam.

"Shall I shout for aid?" he questioned her rapidly.

"If you wish to," she retorted—"though your ghost might consider a cry from you 'quailing,' Monseigneur."

"If you are in peril," replied the Bishop, impatiently, "and I am a fool, I shall call for help."

He made a megaphone of his thin hands, but, before sending a deep halloo over the river, he dropped his hands—and went, agitatedly, at the mysterious running-gear of the boat.

"There *must* be some way to stop us!" he said, between his teeth.

His hair blew up in a wet, black wave from his reddened forehead. His hands became fierce. He crouched forward, lean, young body muscular, cords whipping up on his neck.

"There — must — be!" he blurted, flushing.

Carène's face was not far from his, as she bent to the wheel.

"How amazing!" she panted. "*Impossible!* What possesses it?—Absurd! We can do nothing!"

She was inclined to sob.

"*Sainte Vierge!* to face such absurdity and be powerless—young and strong! We have our teeth, our faculties, Monseigneur, we neither mumble nor whimper— Yet, we cannot stop this moonlit spin!—"

The sobbing voice was hardly more than a breath:

"*Ah, mon Dieu,* we have lost control of our destinies. You, Monseigneur Abelard, with the blood of a massacred missionary—I—. The fall of my medallion was a *porte-malheur!* We are young, *mon ami,* to fly into peril." Faintly: "We are but children, *et beaux enfants!*"

The moist cheek of ivory touched the wet cheek of parchment.

"Have courage," counselled the Bishop, face to the wind. His voice slowed, gained colour. "After all—danger is a beautiful adventure."

She was huddled against him, a luminous head, with phosphorescent hands on the wheel. "But, we do not wish to die!" she quavered. Distraught: "How do we know that we have ever lived?" Anguished: "How do we know but what we have missed something? I, I have not experienced one saintly young minute—and you, you have not eaten a crumb of the bread of joy. We cannot die, unless we have lived! Ah, it is true, as *le bon Dieu* that almost I could love thee if, in this moment, thou couldst give me one taste of saintliness! And—thou—?"

Kneeling in the flying motor-boat, cheek to cheek with a questioning sylph—with possible dangers ahead, and nothing but vapours behind—a look of inward consternation tweaked the Bishop's orderly young features!

He pressed his lean cheek to the fair one. An involuntary sigh was wrung from him.

The moon showed a human and world-old expression on the face of the imperilled young saint from Kyu-shu!

Carène turned her cheek, and kissed him.

The churning spray sang the refrain,

"Pour un peu d'amour, un peu d'amour,
Cet instant divin, mais bien trop court!"

Carène's indiscretion was topped by an effervescent laugh.

"*Voila!* I have control of the wheel, Monseigneur Madrigal!" she exclaimed, in astonishment.

To show him that she spoke the truth, she turned the boat about, in eddies of splashing water—and sped homeward, through ridges snowy and high.

"It is as good as a lamb!" she exclaimed, naively, of the motor-boat. "Whatever possessed it? I've never known it to act that way before. It gave us a perilous second. But, *n'importe,* no harm is done. *N'est-ce-pas?*"

The boat flew down the river.

"It might be possible," with soft gravity, "that our ghosts had some amusement because of our dangerous second. One ghost may have said to another ghost, 'Ah, they are all alike—saint and sinner.'" She sighed and lapsed into musing.

"And, it might be," she added, at length, still grave, "that if ever, under cherry blossoms, a young saint encounters a young sinner, he may hesitate to put his heel upon her cheek—knowing himself to be but a man, Monseigneur."

III

THE rest of the ride was made in silence. The Bishop resumed his erect posture in the cushions, hair blowing up from his forehead a bit wildly.

At the landing, Hemp, the boatman, came out to moor the craft.

Carène gave her hand to the Bishop, who assisted her from the boat. In silence, they walked along the pier. They ascended the tiers of stone steps, described the circles of white concrete, and passed from the shadowy Park.

On reaching the apartment, they found that Pompey had returned.

His mother was better of her heart-seizure, Pompey explained, in relief; she had dismissed her five children with a good-night kiss.

Carène placed a satin toe on the fire-fender.

"Dear *belle-mère*," she smiled, "I love her heart."

She slipped a hand into the pocket of her cloak and drew out the fragments of her medallion.

"My trinket fell from the balcony, and was broken," she told Pompey.

She began to toss bits of ivory into the fire.

"The Bishop and I went to find it. Then we went on the river."

Strands of her finespun hair curled in the glow of the purling fire, as she dropped into it the painted atoms of ivory.

Pompey had a word of sympathy for Carène's broken heirloom, and a word of enthusiasm for motor-boating in the moonlight. Pompey was an all-round sportsman; he enjoyed anything healthy and vigorous. He extended an invitation for a cruise the next evening to the Bishop of Kyu-shu.

But the Bishop was leaving Manhattan in the morning. And, as the hour was somewhat late, he soon deemed it wise to take leave.

He shook Pompey Gilfoil's hand, expressing a hope that he might entertain him some day in Kyu-shu. His manner in saying good-bye to the sylph with drooping orchids at her waist was remote and shy.

"*Adieu*, Monseigneur Madrigal," said Carène. "*Bon voyage*."

She barely concealed a yawn.

Pompey accompanied his dinner-guest to the hall. Stevens put the Bishop into his outer coat and civilly presented him his hat, closing the door automatically on the dignitary.

Pompey strolled back to the drawing-room, sleepy. At the fire-fender, he kissed his young wife good-night; with the heartfelt devotion that made him resemble his mother, who, when lonely, summoned her children to be kissed. He went off to bed, whistling.

Carène sat in the window-seat overlooking the Park and the river. The corn-coloured curtains hardly stirred. The breeze was dying with the moon. The river was running mistily. The sounds of the night were tempered. Fair, disordered head against the window-frame, Carène stripped her hands of their jewels, in a mood of meditation.

Half sadly, she wished herself a young saint.

NO physical exercises yet discovered can compare for a moment with silk stockings for giving an erect carriage to the female head.

WHEN waiting for a man, you wait until he comes. When waiting for a woman, you wait to see if she comes at all.

THE man who moralizes is generally a hypocrite; the woman who moralizes is invariably plain.

THE ALIMENTARY ROUTE

By Helen Drake

WHEN a man is well fed he will propose.

* * * * *

I had heard from childhood that a man could be won if you served him an appetizing meal.

I determined to win the man I loved in this manner.

I learned to cook.

I invited him to dinner.

Mother discharged our cook; I cooked the dinner.

The duck was so savoury that his hand trembled as he dug his fork into it.

He ate nine biscuits that looked like puffs of snow flecked with molten gold.

His face glowed when I brought on a salad topped with mayonnaise, yellow as pollen.

"Delicious!" he said, and my heart pounded with joy.

* * * * *

When a man is well fed he will propose. . . .

While I was serving the demi-tasse the man proposed to my sister.

CHIMNEYS

By Stephen Huguenot

MY window looks across a field
Of leaping chimney-stalagmites;
And some by others are concealed,
And some arise to splendid heights;
And over every house and tree
There hangs a gas barrage of coke;
But one small stack blows up to me
A wistful question-mark of smoke.

I cannot see the folks who light
The fires beneath this masque of flues;
Their cats by day, their deeds by night,
Nor what the brand of coke they use:
But from a window just below
One little stack, most every day,
There looks a girl I do not know,
Who quickly turns her head away.

THE METHOD OF TRIAL AND ERROR

By Laura Kent Mason

I

YESTERDAY I took luncheon with Cornelia. And while we lunched I solved a mystery about her. Not that there was anything really mysterious—but Cornelia, well, Cornelia is different. As for my solution—she was in one of those oddly confidential moods that even the most discreet women indulge in, unexpectedly—all I did was to nod or fill in pauses with the appropriate "yes" or "no."

I don't feel that I'm exploiting Cornelia to tell what she told me. Although Cornelia probably will not tell it again for some, I think she is glad it is told. She did not pledge me to secrecy; in fact she seemed rather proud of herself, as if, in solving her own problems, she had very cleverly pointed the way in the problems of hundreds of other women, a shining arrow toward freedom.

I've known Cornelia since she was eighteen, the year before she came out. Now, Cornelia must be about twenty-nine, but she has kept most of the attractions of her girlhood. She is a little under medium height and slender, with a pale, oval face and immense dark eyes. Cornelia never uses rouge, but she keeps her skin always quite powdery, her mouth red and moist-looking, and her eyebrows narrow and dark. Cornelia's hair is brown and sleek and she pulls it very severely away from her face. She has awfully good taste in clothes, she knows how to buy little hats with just the right tilt to them and manages to look severe and trim out of doors, but goes in for rather bizarre house frocks and evening gowns. Usually she wears black or white or grey with effective touches of combinations of green and purple. But the thing that makes Cornelia stand out from the thousands is a sort of a gayness, a buoyancy and lightness of spirit, an inner glittering always ready to peep out.

Cornelia was still in school when I first met her, but she was having a mighty good time, even then, going to all sorts of informal, permissible parties, always accompanied by a good-looking youth or two. Some sleek, bright-eyed boy was always adjusting her coat or putting on her skates or bringing her tea.

Cornelia made her début at a dinner dance her aunt, her mother's older sister, Mrs. Lucy Paxton, gave for her at Sherry's. Mrs. Truman Blair was her father's only sister, so it was taken for granted that Cornelia would be entertained a lot and that she would be one of the most popular girls of the season. The Grants weren't rich, as you count money these days, but their house with its big living rooms and huge fireplaces was an ideal place to entertain young people. The slight shabbiness of the furniture made you feel more at home than in one of the newly done houses with heavy hangings and rigid correctness.

Cornelia was even more popular than her most envious friends had been afraid of. Practically every débutante is supposed to have the pick of half a dozen eligibles, even when she clutches at the very first proposal from any man who has any sort of an income or position. Cornelia really had quite a lot of chances at matrimony, but she didn't

accept any of them. She spent her first and her second winters having a good time. She did enjoy things so. Even the stupidest musical comedy seemed fun to Cornelia. She could giggle so at the comedian. At a drama she'd have to wipe her eyes, surreptitiously turning toward the darkest corner of the box, at the least touch of sentiment or tragedy. Each dinner, each supper, each dance seemed something splendidly new and worth while. Life was full of good times.

Perhaps a dozen girls, far less attractive than Cornelia, married and settled down into various stages of domesticity. Cornelia played around, always a good-looking man or two at her heels, rides in the park, teas at the Ritz or the Plaza or some of the smaller tea places, promenades in the Avenue and calls on fair afternoons, dinner engagements every evening or a few people in, informal dances, the theatre. Cornelia's people were a little afraid that she'd turn into one of those unique girls that a modern civilization has created, too popular and fickle to marry, who allow inferior members of their sex to pick off all of their own pet eligibles and who, at thirty-five or so, sink into a semi-sporty, semi-successful career of bachelor-girlhood, something between a joke and a personage.

But, when she was twenty-one, Cornelia met Harley Gresham. Harley had been in England since Cornelia's début, but he came back, then, to stay. It was love at first sight, I believe, so far as there is such a thing. At once, Cornelia and Harley began going everywhere together. You'd find Harley at the Grants every afternoon at tea time, unless you saw the two of them somewhere else. Cornelia's people gave a sigh of relief, and, when the engagement was announced, their blessings. Harley wasn't rich, not as rich as they had hoped the husband of Cornelia might be. But his family was irreproachable and he, himself, was a mighty likable young fellow.

Some people thought Harley Gresham too handsome, but there are always those who are not satisfied with unflawed perfection. His beauty just bordered on effeminacy without being disagreeable. He was just a trifle over medium height and as slender as Cornelia. His hair was a little lighter than hers, as were his eyes, which were long and narrow. But his skin was becomingly sunburned nearly all the time and his face was quite lean and wide-awake and attractive.

After a few months of being engaged, months which seemed to be flowing over with good times—everyone gave parties for them and took, as payment, the eager pleasure the young couple had in their entertainment—Cornelia and Harley were married, quietly, and went to California for a six months' honeymoon. When they came back, for Harley had to go to work—it seemed he was with a large brokerage firm—they took a rather modest apartment near Cornelia's parents, filled it with the wedding presents and the few necessary basic things that wedding guests neglect to supply and went to housekeeping.

II

THEY seemed ideally happy. We spoke of them as "the happy couple" or "those young Greshams" and the new younger set took great delight in asking Cornelia to chaperone their affairs. The chaperone always seemed to have the best time of anyone. She personified careless youth and joy.

Cornelia and Harley were practically always together, the ideal "happy couple." Occasionally, you'd see Cornelia at lunch with one of her many old friends or having tea with some rejected suitor, but she always seemed preoccupied, a bit indifferent. When she was with Harley she was as delighted and as full of happiness over little things as she had been at every novelty her first season out. The two of them bubbled and glowed.

That is, Cornelia and Harley seemed ideally happy for the first two or maybe three years. Then, quite gradually, we couldn't help noticing the change. It

seemed incredible to us, knowing Cornelia, but Cornelia was bored. And Harley seemed bored, too. The buoyancy and lightness and gladness that had made them seem so splendidly young gradually disappeared. They didn't start going with anyone else. They didn't "drift apart." They went everywhere together except to odd luncheons and teas. Neither of them seemed to pay more than the most superficial attention to anyone else. It was just with themselves that something seemed wrong—as if a flame had been snuffed out.

Another year passed and things were even worse with them. Dining with "the young Greshams" was just like dining anywhere else—a good dinner, nicely served, the usual little chatter about nothing, at the head and foot of the table a rather bored young couple with big, tragic eyes, who were immensely polite to each other and to their guests, who said just the right things in the right way, but not at all the Cornelia and Harley who had meant laughter, almost giggles, clever repartee, flashes of light, impudence.

Then, when the Greshams had been married about four years and Cornelia was only twenty-five, we heard that they had separated. We tried not to believe it at first—it had seemed as if they could patch things up—most people get bored after a few years of matrimony. Harley went West on business, the little apartment was closed and Cornelia went to live with her parents. The next year Cornelia got a divorce. Harley had given her real cause for it, according to Cornelia's lawyers, who named one of those indefinite persons who are always being named in divorce proceedings. We couldn't imagine how Harley could have been interested in such a person, knowing Cornelia. That hadn't been it—there was something else, of course. We knew that. For years there had been something. It wasn't the cheap co-respondent or Harley's having known her.

Cornelia went back into the life of her crowd. Gradually, some of her gaiety and delight in things came back, too. Not as much as before. But once more there was always a new man at her heels, and her repartee, a little sharper, as her chin was a trifle sharper, earned her a new reputation for cleverness that her marriage had almost taken away.

Another year and, quite unexpectedly, Cornelia married again. This marriage left us all gasping—and with far different emotions than her first marriage had. For Cornelia married Joseph Hill Stevenson. He is just the man I wouldn't have picked out for her. In the first place, Stevenson is forty or older. He is a splendid character, of course, and all that—one of those "examples to young men." He made all of his money himself. He started in a very humble position, in the great collar factory which he now owns. Of course he could give Cornelia everything she could ask for, but then Cornelia's happiness had never seemed to depend on money. We remembered those first years of her marriage, when happiness seemed to surround Cornelia and Harley with a golden aura. And now Cornelia had married Joseph Hill Stevenson.

Stevenson was rather fat, a respectable fatness, to be sure, more stout than tubby. His hair had receded well back on his head and was crisply waved and grey. His skin was rather red and coarse. He was slow and heavy-minded. He laughed, deeply, at obvious things. How could Cornelia help comparing him to Harley and this marriage with her first years of being in love?

I think we all felt sorry for Cornelia, a comforting sort of sorrow, the kind one feels toward a little girl who has broken her favourite doll and is trying, so bravely, to go on playing with the second best and pretending not to mind. Cornelia seemed serenely unaware of our sympathy. She settled down into a correct hostess of the home Stevenson bought in the East Seventies. She took great pains with the decorations—I saw her spend an hour discussing the desirability of two pieces of grey taffeta with

her decorator. She was taking a sincere and eager interest in the library hangings.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Hill Stevenson entertained with many correct dinners. They went together to the theatre and the opera. They were popular, sought after. Cornelia seemed to have a good time at parties, too, not with the carefree buoyancy of her young girlhood, nor with the happy lightness of her early married life, but with charm and eagerness and evident contentment. We heaved a sigh. Had we been mistaken about Cornelia, after all? Was she just an ordinary person who had fooled us with false gaiety, and who, now, after an unfortunate marriage, had settled comfortably into a usual young matronhood?

Then, six months ago, Harley Gresham came home. He came home to stay, he told everyone, and took rooms in Madison Avenue. And, somehow, because Cornelia had settled down into such colourless respectability, it never occurred to me that Harley's return might affect her seriously. I don't think any of us thought of it.

I heard that they were seeing each other. Even that didn't seem to mean a great deal. It was a few months ago that I first saw Cornelia and Harley together, having tea in a quaint little tea-room near the park. I had stopped in with Philip, who is always too ready for tea and toast. There they were, at a little painted table, acting as if they were sixteen. I've never seen such frank joy on the face of anyone over twelve, to be more accurate. They were taking absolutely no pains to conceal their pleasure in each other, though of course they were quiet and well-bred enough about it. If you had never seen them before, you might not have noticed anything extraordinary. Their whole table seemed surrounded with their old aura of gladness. Cornelia was using her little-girl giggle. Each tiny sandwich seemed an unheard-of wonder. Harley, lounging gracefully—he is the type that is always in graceful poses—watched every one of her tiny motions. They both waved to us and smiled a bit self-consciously. Cornelia even winked, the broad wink of a school-boy, and then they went on with their little joys as if the tea-room and the rest were leagues away.

I saw them frequently after that, driving in the park, having tea together, meeting at their friends' homes with an absurdly grotesque pretence of surprise. Yet, all the time, Cornelia was being a dutiful and correct married woman, hostess at numerous correct dinners—where Harley was a frequent guest—attending to her household duties and her servants, going to the many affairs that came to her as routine things. And yet, when you saw her and Harley together. . . .

That's why I wondered, why I felt that there was a mystery about Cornelia. She couldn't love Joseph Stevenson, that seemed certain. Yet she was quite nice to him, always. They seemed content when you saw them out together, and I knew they spent many quiet evenings at home. Yet Cornelia and Harley—one glance at them, their two interested, eager faces, quite close together, their laughter, their evident joy in being together, and you knew how they felt. Yet if Cornelia had loved Harley, why had she left him—why hadn't they been happy? We never believed any more of the co-respondent than the law required. If Cornelia loved Harley now, why didn't she leave Stevenson? Still, if she had married Stevenson because she cared for him, why did she act this way about Harley? And yet Cornelia kept on—I couldn't help wondering. Yesterday, when I took luncheon with Cornelia, she told me.

III

CORNELIA had glanced at her wrist as we began our salad.

"Must hurry," she said; "here, it's nearly two. I've got millions of things to do, and I'm to meet Harley at half-past four."

Her face lit up into a most mischievous smile.

"Harley—you act as if it's a most delicious treat."

"It is, of course."

"And yet—?"

"Yet—what?"

"When you and Harley—"

"Oh, be a good one. Don't preach. You remind me of my aunts. Preaching's a horrid habit, old dear."

"I shan't preach. What right have I? Only you'll admit you are rather odd."

"Me odd? I'm most un-odd. It's the others, who don't do things like me, who are odd. If I were only odd or different, some other arrangement might do—might have done. It's only because I'm so conventional, usual. Don't you see?"

"I'm stupid—I'm afraid I don't."

"You don't understand about Harley and me?"

She gave one of her delicious, very-young-girl giggles. It's then, I think, she decided to be a flaming arrow to other young married people.

"I've always loved Harley, of course—only, don't you see, I shouldn't have loved him—first—or married him."

"I don't understand yet."

"Well, Harley is someone to be in love with, not to marry. That's all there is to it! He isn't a husband—the husband type, I mean. See now?"

There was a faint glimmer. I nodded.

"One shouldn't marry Harleys. It's like expecting butterflies to pull milk waggons. I'm different. I'm a woman. Women marry. They get used to marrying, having done it for thousands of years. You've got to have someone to go home to, a solid background. But Harley isn't the type women marry. Harleys don't marry, or oughtn't.

"I was mad over Harley from the first time I saw him. Marriage—I was young and didn't understand. Harley is the type to love and meet—dear little secret meetings. But imagine eating *marrons glacés* for breakfast!

"Being married to Harley was awful, for both of us. We thought we liked it at first—a sort of game. Gradually—

"Oh, it wasn't Harley. I got tired first. Harley should be a treat, not a habit. Harley likes perfect things. I don't blame him. He's the sort that can have them. But imagine being perfect—all the time—when you wake up in the morning—late at night—when you're headachy. Imagine trying to make everything in life, in routine living, an exciting episode.

"Before being married, it was awfully jolly, meeting unexpectedly during the day or even doing little planned things. We'd save things to tell each other when we met. I could always have a different mood for him and he for me. But even Harley couldn't be good company steadily. Ugh, I'll never forget as the days passed—and we grew used to being together. Imagine having to discuss household things—that *must* be discussed *some* time—or money—with Harley! Seeing him day after day, all kinds of weather—talking about weather, even—do you wonder I thought I was through?

"We tried separating. I took a couple of trips with Mother, and Harley went away on business several times. It didn't do. We always felt the obligations pulling. If we could have had separate establishments—but even that wouldn't have answered, with Harley.

"So, when we couldn't stand it any longer—well, you know. The divorce was awful, of course. We hated that part. But it was like a needed operation, I guess. We recovered.

"Then I met Joseph. You don't understand this, I know. But I bet there are women who do! As soon as I met him, I knew. Just think—a man who'd never had a nickname—always Joseph or Mr. Stevenson. He carried with him the feeling of solidity, of domestic contentment. He actually wanted to be settled. Joseph was a born husband. See now? He's the husband type. That's all—I married him.

"Of course I like Joseph—love him, in a nice, wifely, breakfasty way. He's perfectly content. I'm as content as I'll ever be. Joseph adores discussing household things. We expect to bore

each other. He loves formal dinners—he's always bringing in most impossible people—to 'show off' his home and his wife. So you see—"

"But does he—know about Harley?" I ventured. Things weren't quite clear.

"Oh, in a way. Why be so stupidly definite? Joseph knows I care for him. I left Harley because we weren't happy and married him, didn't I? He's a husband. Don't you see? Husbands expect wives to have little affairs, amusements. He's busy during the day, he's interested in his business. He's awfully jealous, of course. That adds to the zest. But all husbands are. But he has the usual, husband-like conceit and believes that he comes first. The perfect husband.

"Even before Harley came back I understood. Harley did, too. Our error was, you see, in meeting too soon. We should have been introduced just about now. We're making the best of it. All of the glamour of secret meetings, of little unexpected joys, has come back. We can save up things to tell each other. We're being wicked, naughty, modern. Harley is wonderful in his own way—a perfect lover type, that's all."

Cornelia finished her parfait and looked at her watch again.

"Now I must run. I've got to try on a frock at Bendel's and see about having some new candles made—it's so hard to get that hand-dipped kind in the right shades—and I simply mustn't be late for tea. . . ."

POETIC MADNESS

By Carl Glick

I WROTE as one inspired.
It was a poem dedicated to her . . . comparing her eyes to stars, her hair to wind-swept tresses, and her soul to the glow of worlds new-born.
I hoped it would please her.
I said in my letter, "For only your eyes is this poem written. In all the world there is but one copy. It shall never be published. But I shall hint that this, my masterpiece, exists. It will be a matter of literary mystery. And should this one copy never be found, it will be lost to the world for ever."

When I met her, I expected a reward.
But she would not speak to me.
Had I offended her by the poem?
I trembled.

Without a word she handed me the poem. . . .
It was the carbon copy!

LUIS—AND AN EPISODE

By Muna Lee

I

AT first resentment possessed her. It was unfair. She had earned all that life offered through Luis. A dozen bitter cinematographic memories of childhood flickered through her mind. With particular vividness she recalled a purchase of grey knitted gloves on a windy Fall afternoon. She felt again the pure joy of pulling them on over stiff chapped fingers; the æsthetic delight in their greyness among so many buffs and reds. She thought flinchingly of the eternal struggle at home to keep the younger children supplied with shoes and pencils; of her father's unrewarded ideals; of her mother's twisted hand.

Surely she had deserved to find some relief from this. She was young, and circumstances had denied her youth: until, with a sudden grandiloquence of gesture, Chance had flung open a door, and Life stretched out before her, after all those rigid years, beautiful and understandable, bewildering only in the sudden multiplicity of its promises, the romance and colour bent down to her grasp. And now with equal suddenness, the world had again become a tangle, a rough maze.

Perhaps she had been too eager to accept joy, too ready to believe in it. Perhaps her attitude had tempted fate. She had not denied to herself for a moment that she was glad to give up the struggle, to relax fibres grown accustomed to tension. Incontestably, no one had ever turned with greater willingness from a battle unwon, a task incomplete. But was not that life's inevitable demand of women? She had been perfectly willing to devote herself to Luis's variable demands; to submerge her own personality in his if necessary. She had not doubted nor did she doubt her ability to make him happy. She had been fair to Luis; it would have been so easy, would still be so easy, for him to marry a woman who would render him miserable. Why then should she reproach herself because every nerve of her spirit had rejoiced to be relieved of the strain that now had to begin again; all for an idea, a revolt within her own mind? All, in short, for an afternoon with Robert Clark.

At the thought, a sudden wonder swept her that she had not foreseen something of this that night when she first met them both. It was Luis whom she had looked forward to meeting. It was Robert Clark whose personality had called to her like a voice across the crowded room. She remembered how he had smiled down on her as he verified her name, and how, when Alice Ferrer had asked with cheerful insolence, "Well, what do you think of the young lady?" he questioned slowly:

"That she must be very loyal in her beliefs, and rather deliberate in her judgment."

She remembered, too, how he had left soon after, long before anyone else, and Luis had crossed over to her side. After that there was little to remember but Luis, Luis, Luis: Luis with his extravagant promises, his unfailing response to her mood, his passion and tenderness and absurd jealousies: Luis laying down his salad fork to say with great earnestness:

"We must learn to know each other; talk to me about God!"

Luis tracing in his palm the outline

of his beloved *cerro;* Luis sombrely demanding forgiveness because his first kiss had been given to a woman with false teeth; Luis relating with gusto a colourful and highly irreverent anecdote about his British great-grandmother; Luis speaking rapidly with blurred *s*'s in one of his delightful and tempestuous angers. It was very pretty to think of Luis. There was no imperfect memory of him. He was preëminently the lover of whom one dreams without much faith that he will ever come true; and he had come true for her. Glamour and romance were made for him; but she reminded herself also, with great respect, of the simplicity and Latin directness that frequently pierced his moods. If it had seemed at times that they played a fascinating game in which the prize would go to the nimblest wit, she had nevertheless recognized his underlying sincerity; and she had loved him. The make-believe had realized itself. Even at first she had not hesitated, nor doubted for long; if love had seemed an easier and gayer thing than she had expected it to be, that had been adequately explained by her lack of experience.

At that, love had not proved more different from her conception than any other aspect of life. If there had been any pretence with Luis, it was pretence that deceived herself as well. That first evening when he exclaimed impetuously, "We have something to say to each other?" the mystery and magic of youth had surged around them, overpowering their will to speak.

Next evening he had burst out with that amazing and unpremeditated proposal of immediate marriage.

"But you have never seen me with my hat off?" she protested, and tossing it aside had lifted her face to the light, laughing, as he leaned to her lips. She recalled her apprehensive question, "What will you tell your family of me?" and the gay confidence of his answer:

"That you are a little Uruguayan girl who happened to be born in North America."

II

After that there had been no apprehensions. She had refused deliberately even to question herself. Those stars that fought against Sisera had formed a beneficent alliance. What charm he possessed, what persuasion! Could anyone else have won her father from stronghold after stronghold of his opposition: race, family, religion? Or have fully convinced her mother? How easy and pleasant life had seemed! How grateful it had been to realize that always, so long as she lived, she should be petted, sheltered, appealed to, cared for! The people, the things, the places she had longed to make her own would be hers now. Luis as lover, Luis as husband—she had grown in self-confidence with her confidence of the future.

Even when his pride had sent him to war, she had not been afraid. He would be safe enough. The gods always looked out for him.

It would have been the reasonable and natural thing to wait until he came for her, to marry him, to take up the romance of life in the Banda Oriental. For a moment she wavered toward the belief that Robert Clark's coming had been an injustice.

It was like him, and as unlike Luis as possible, to come unannounced, a year after their one meeting, absolutely sure of her welcome. Chance granted them an afternoon of perfect weather. The empty park through which they wandered might have been a Shakespearean woodland — with carefully grouped trees, and at intervals great clumps of crimson and shell-pink gladioli, absurdly out of place and tremendously effective—while they kept silence or talked freely of the Eastern assignment on account of which he was sailing the next week.

"How long will you be gone?" she had asked, and wondered to find herself stricken dumb when he answered:

"Perhaps four years."

It had been a long afternoon. They had walked, had made pretence of looking over the notes for his next article,

and had spoken freely at first and afterwards with some hesitancy of Luis.

When they stopped to watch a metallic sunset flaming above an expanse of damp grey weeds he looked at her with a smile.

"You are very fine," he commented.

"And you—are like Odin and Thor!" she replied shakily.

"So-o?" he said with a characteristic deep intonation; and for an electric moment they stared at each other unsmilingly.

As they turned away, he pointed out a clump of asters to remark on their likeness to the Shasta daisies of a suburban backyard that had been his years ago. She could hardly credit the wave of jealousy that swept her—she who had laughed at Luis's incessant flirtations! For Robert Clark's wife, diffident, gentle, obviously of another generation, she felt no more than an affectionate comprehension. But that backyard—she could not bear to think that he had looked at it morning after morning, rising early perhaps to water the daisies, entirely content and supremely unaware of her existence.

They found a rocky ledge to their liking, and he leaned back against an elm-trunk with a lazy question:

"Why don't you take off your hat?"

She laid it aside obediently, and began picking a cluster of asters to bits, while he watched with patent disapproval until she caught his glance and threw the flowers away, flushing.

They were silent for a while, content, absolutely devoid of self-consciousness. Essentially their understanding was complete. Lightly, he put his arm around her. The gesture was a question which she considered gravely. Luis—she realized suddenly and completely that she need not consider Luis. Deliberately she leaned back against Robert Clark's shoulder. Yet, yielding to his arm, her face half-hidden against his coat, with one hand she shielded her cheek. He brushed her hair with his lips contentedly, until at last she raised her face and their lips met in a long kiss. It left her curiously surprised and shaken. She had never been kissed like that before, she thought incoherently. It was a man's kiss, something third personal and meanly analytical in her mind explained; Luis was her own age or a year or so older. His lips sought hers again and analysis fled, defeated.

An insistent clamour in her brain voiced itself at last.

"There is nothing wrong in what I feel for you," she said, challengingly.

His arm tightened around her and he looked across the grey weeds.

"We are fools if we let this go," he said.

She found no answer to the assertion because for the moment she believed passionately that it was true. He rose with her in his arms and walked toward the top of the hillock. She wondered vaguely at the ease with which he carried her; and, half afraid and supremely happy, she felt that she worshipped his strength. She realized with a flash of comprehension that she should never know a greater happiness than this, to cling to his shoulder as he stumbled through a pile of brush toward the hilltop.

It was difficult to remember what they had said. He had spoken once abruptly.

"It may get pretty cold on the steppes and the hunger may get pretty bad, but sometimes at intervals of hours, always at intervals of days, I shall remember this afternoon with you."

And when she protested, very much as she had protested with Luis,

"But you do not even know me!" he replied with soft violence.

"I do not know you? I know you better than some who think they know you!" Then in a moment:

"When I come back I may find you loving another man, and there can be only a word and a handclasp between us; but even with that I shall understand."

To which she cried out in passionate denial:

"You know I will love you always!"

And he asked curtly:

"What else could you think?"

He had kissed her again, swift, hard kisses that shook her hair over her shoulders so that he buried his face in its softness, and he had asked wistfully, touching her with heart-break for his loneliness.

"Doesn't this mean something? Don't you believe it is something big?"

Again she told him fiercely:

"You know that I love you! I would rather have you doubt your love for me than doubt that!"

And this time he agreed:

"You will love me if I don't lie to you, and if I don't make demands."

This was too true to refute. Because it was true she hated the world and all the people in it and wished suddenly that she were dead. Above all she hated herself. It was grotesque, incredible, that she should withhold any happiness from him. It was horrible. She could not comprehend God.

He understood what was in her mind, for in a moment he said quietly:

"I don't make any demands, dear."

III

THAT was all. They had gone home, and he had sailed for Archangel and she should not see him again for four years—she should never really see him again. She did not deceive herself. He had loved her that afternoon and would always love her, but life would not be materially different to him even though they did not meet again. Individuals counted for little with him, after all. It made no difference. He had given her what she had craved and had despaired of finding—something to believe in. He was a type of that strength of which she had dreamed; she felt she could say her prayers to it. She had thought that only Death could be trusted, that only Death was absolutely sure; and because she thought that, it had been easy to turn her back on reality when Luis called. That evasion was no longer possible. It gave her a fierce joy to make the deliberate choice of pain and struggle and ultimate defeat. Life denied her Robert Clark and she denied herself Luis: very well then, she would find out what meanings life had left. At least she was done with compromise. She could even feel glad now that love had no lesser joy to give her than that one joy of love itself. Her first vague resentment against circumstance vanished like a mist.

She thought of Luis and his rage and wonder. She was sorry for Luis—she was reminiscently sorry for Montevideo and the Banda Oriental. But for Robert Clark and herself she was suddenly not sorry in the least.

THE TRUE BELIEVER

By T. F. Mitchell

HE was a man of simple life and simple virtues. His predominant characteristic was faith. His faith was supreme. They tell a very beautiful story about him. When his wife fell off the fishing pier he sat there an hour patiently waiting for her to come up.

PASTELS IN PROSE

By Winthrop Parkhurst

I

THE Night sought to capture the Day in his arms, for he loved her greatly, and desired to make her his bride. But when he so much as caressed her cheek gently with his cool fingers of twilight she ran away swiftly on the feet of the afternoon. And when he pursued her further she disappeared quickly behind the Western hills and was no more seen. Thus it came to pass that the Night, sorrowful and forlorn, dropped bitter tears upon the earth. And in the morning men found them and called them dew.

II

THE Moon frowned and pulled a heavy cloud angrily across her face. She had suffered a gross indignity. A grey-haired old gentleman, with his eye at a telescope, had momentarily forgotten his calculations and was winking at her indecently.

III

THE Sun god raised his *baton* impressively in the sky. Obediently one hundred million people turned over in their beds and snored in unison. The symphony of the day began.

IV

HER lips were like the parted petals of a new-blown rose. Her breath was like the fragrance of clover blossoms after they are swept by evening rain. Her little hands were tired homing birds that fluttered softly round my head, eternally in search of rest. Her long pink-white finger nails were as unforgiving as a barbed-wire fence planted about a garden of sacred lilies.

V

BECAUSE the artist was poor and had no paints for his picture the woman whom he loved gave him the necessary colours. And the colours which she gave him were seven, and these were the colours: red from her lips, white from her limbs, green from her eyes, ivory from her brow, black from her hair, purple from her heart, and gold from the love which she bore him. And when the artist had painted his picture he beheld it, and it was very beautiful.

Now it came to pass that after many months the artist needed some money. Therefore, with cunning in his brain, he took the picture in which were the ivory of a woman's brow and the purple of a woman's heart and sold it to a certain rich patron of the arts for thirty shining pieces of silver. And when he had done this, he departed with the money which he had gained, and bought himself many rich, strange wines to drink. And when he had become drunk with them all, so that the moon looked like the eyeball of a dead woman and the stars were like little clots of blood upon the sky, he returned to his house, shaking with a fever.

And with the colours that remained on his palette he painted another picture. And the colours of the picture which he painted were seven, and these were the colours: red, the colour of lust; green, the colour of envy; ivory, the colour of greed; black, the colour of hate; white, the colour of death; purple, the colour of pride; gold, the colour of his soul.

VI

Two exquisite, opalescent conch shells were washed up on to the shore of

the sea. They were as perfectly modelled as a young girl's ear, and in their pearly depths was carefully treasured the eternal gossip of the ocean.

VII

OUT of the mouth of the cynic there came forth a river of bitterness like unto a swift-flowing stream of wormwood and gall. Therefore his friends questioned him, saying:

"Wherefore dost thy mouth continually drop bitterness as a persimmon tree drops acid fruit to the ground?"

And the cynic answered them, saying:

"Because my mouth is full of bitterness I must ever empty it of bitterness, else the sweet mouth of her whom I love would taste bitter to me also."

And, so saying, he delivered unto them a mocker's sermon on the folly of life, and departed quickly to the couch of his belovèd.

VIII

A CERTAIN king, whose ears had long been filled with the venomous gossip of foolish women, bethought himself to make a public example of their folly. Wherefore, in kingly fashion, he ordered that the tongue of each guilty woman should be severed from her head at the edge of a shining sword. When this deed was duly accomplished he proclaimed the celebration of a royal feast which should be composed entirely of women's tongues. And at the appointed hour he sat down before a golden platter and publicly ate them. . . . The women gossiped no more. But the king, it is said, died that same night of a most curiously virulent poison.

THERE are two classes of men: those who never regret a pleasure, and those who don't know what a pleasure is.

THERE is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about by the righteous, and that is being talked to.

A MAN regards a kiss as a speculation; a woman, as an investment.

RELATIVES are persons who live too near and die too seldom.

HANDSOME MEN

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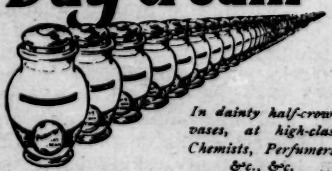

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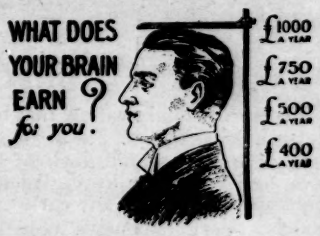

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ABOUT FASHIONS AND OTHER THINGS

By Various Hands

If the proverbial swallow that heralds the spring has not yet put in an appearance, at least a whole flock of buyers have arrived from Paris laden with spoil in the shape of early spring models. Very expensive models too, but all the same very lovely!

Not that they have a great many. Paris, like London, is very short of workers, and wages have gone up in leaps and bounds. They have almost more orders than they can cope with, and as a result are not over-anxious to send what they have out of the country. However, trade must be held together, and so our London representatives have not come back empty-handed. Extremes seem to have vanished for good, and we no longer see those exaggerated atrocities that used to be labelled "Paris" for the benefit of the Huns!

Skirts are tight and very short, but—except in a very few cases—not exaggeratedly so. It is wonderful how very dowdy a skirt, that would have been thought almost too abbreviated two years ago, can look now that our eyes have become accustomed to a certain shortness.

Coats are fairly long, very straight, and loosely belted once more. It is unusual to have long coats in the spring, but this year it is so on account of the skirts that have already been referred to. Tunics are particularly popular! Long, simple, slim-looking, and often with loose sash ends or panels at the sides, probably for the same reason. Sometimes only just a few inches of the skirt is shown. Collars are often small, and set right away from the neck at the sides. Some coats, however, boast wide ones of the draped persuasion which taper away into long narrow revers. None of them have that closely fitting neat tailor-made collar and revers that we are so used to, and which owed their origin to a man's coat. The great object seems to be to reveal the pretty modelling of the throat and neck, a point that tailors have ignored for many a long day.

Charmeuse and taffetas are the favourite materials for afternoon frocks, principally I am told because the Parisians are using up the old stock that has been on the market for some time, pending the day when all their factories are in full working order once more. Indeed, in some ways we seem to have stepped back to exactly where we left off four and a half years ago, when frivolities were cast aside and we all went Red-Crossing! Take the opera cloak for example. Some of them are line for line the same shaped affairs of silk and brocade, with large fur collars, that we knew and loved long since and had not time to get tired of. Lucky is the woman who has one tucked away in her trunk, for she will find herself in the height of fashion.

But to return to our "muttons," otherwise afternoon frocks! The most startling innovation is that they have tiny little elbow sleeves, and, of course, they are very *décolleté* compared with those to which we have become accustomed; but after all, not more so than in the beginning of the nineteenth century, when George IV. was king. Phillip Gibbs, in his "Descriptive Notes" in a book entitled "Old English Costumes," tells us a story of how "Russian officers in 1799, who, accustomed at home to estimate the rank of a lady by the warmth of her clothing, offered a woman a penny in Bond Street under the impression that, from her scantily clothed appearance, she must be a pauper."

If that Russian were alive to-day, methinks when the warm weather comes he would feel compelled to offer many pennies, as not only are the afternoon frocks short and *décolletés*, but the arms, they tell me, will remain uncovered and unashamed, gloves are quite incorrect—this last is a concession to necessity, skins being so difficult to procure that gloves are both scarce and expensive. Sun-kissed arms may sound very alluring in theory, but in reality the result does not promise to be very happy.

Beautifying Barbara.

By MIMOSA.

How a Plain Girl was Made Pretty.

BARBARA had always been considered the ugly duckling of the family, and certainly no one would have voted her attractive the day she called on me, and told me how tired she was of being classed amongst the dull and uninteresting women of her set.

To tell the truth, Barbara had fallen in love, and was anxious, as she had never been before, to appear at her best. She wasn't a flapper; she was twenty-eight, but there were possibilities in her, and I promised her that if she would follow my advice carefully, she wouldn't recognise her own reflection in the mirror in a month's time.

Her Complexion.

WITH a good complexion, the plainest features look attractive, but Barbara's unfortunately left much to be desired. It was muddy, and there were blackheads around the nose and mouth, caused, I think, through using impure toilet soaps. For the dull muddy look I made her rub a little pure mercolised wax gently into the face and neck every night, leaving on the skin till the next morning. This very gently and imperceptibly peeled off all the dead, dull outer cuticle, leaving the fresh young complexion underneath, and giving her a skin as clear and fresh as a baby's. The blackheads were soon removed. A stymol tablet was dissolved in hot water, and the face bathed and gently dried. After two applications all signs of the blackheads had disappeared.

Beautifying Her Hair.

BARBARA had a fairly good head of hair, but it had been very much neglected. I don't know what she had shampooed it with, but it certainly wasn't the right stuff; for her hair was dull and lifeless without the bright lights it should have possessed there was no wave in it, and it appeared to be falling out rather more than was natural.

So I made her get some stallax at the chemist's, and give it a good shampoo. A stallax shampoo leaves the hair soft, silky and glossy, and no rinsing is necessary. After one shampoo a most marked improvement could be noticed, and by the time Barbara had used it three times, with an interval of a fortnight between each shampoo, you would not have recognised it as the same head of hair. Then to stop the fall I advised her to get two ounces of boranium, and mix it with water and a little Bay Rum. This she dabbed into the roots every night, and it not only stopped the fall, but gave the hair great vitality.

A Little Colour to the Cheeks.

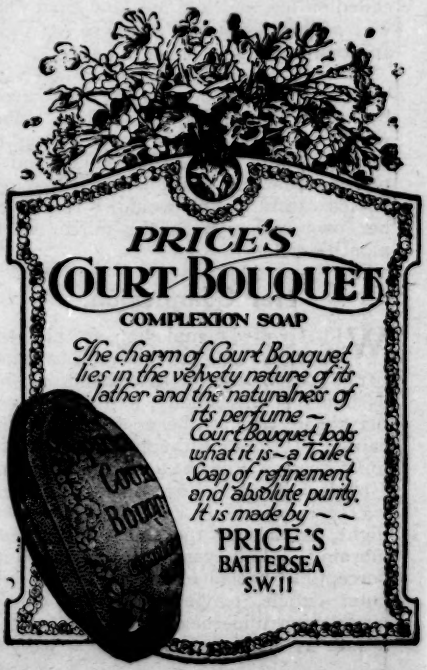
BARBARA is one of those girls who are much improved by a little colour in the cheeks, but unfortunately she has none naturally. So I suggested that she should get some colliandum and apply a very little to the cheeks with a small piece of cotton wool. The most critical observer cannot detect that a colour given by this method is not natural, for this wonderful powder is just the correct tint, and has an advantage which no other artificial colour has; it deepens slightly in a warm atmosphere, and thus appears absolutely natural.

One little black taffetas frock was particularly reminiscent of a century ago, with its inner vest in the *decollétage* of frilly white embroidered muslin, which looked as if it had come out of one's grandmother's treasure-bag; and under the fichu of black taffetas were little puff sleeves also of the dainty muslin. These same frillies promise to be popular, as one was also seen peeping out of the front of one of the more severe tailor-mades—not that any of these are very severe. Many of the longer coats are cut in Chinese fashion with a deep kimono effect at the back, tapering into real sleeves and cuffs in front. These large slip-on coats promise to be very useful worn in conjunction with the airy afternoon frock, particularly at race-meetings, or any out-of-door gathering where one is dependent on this changeable climate of ours. One of these coats, cut on the lines just described, and tapering off towards the foot so that it becomes a cross between a cloak wrapped round the figure and an ulster, was made in pale grey check tweed, and lined with a very wonderful Paisley silk. It was extraordinarily useful, and very smart at the same time.

Evening frocks are daily becoming more "solid," which is a real boon to the girl on a dress allowance in these days when all the world—at any rate the allied world—is dancing mad. A special feature is the very large butterfly-bow of ribbon brocade worn at one side. The ribbon used is quite a quarter of a yard wide, and generally has one long end which forms a kind of small train, and certainly lends importance to a very short evening frock. It can be draped over one arm for dancing. Some of the bodices are made entirely of fairly wide ribbon cunningly twisted round the figure, the shoulder-strap ends being used to interlace them at either side, and the whole is softened by a floating mist of filmy lace. It is an excellent idea for renovating a "tired" frock that has become limp and jaded after a long series of jazz and fox-trots. Beauty-satin, metal-brocade, and tissue are still the most popular materials.

EXPRESSION AND BEAUTY

Expression is the plain woman's greatest asset in the way of looks. The clear responsive eye, that is ever ready to sparkle with fun or grow soft in sympathy, covers many irregularities of feature and makes even a sallow complexion merely an unobtrusive background. A happy expression is, of course, largely a matter of soul, but health has a lot to do with it. Lack-lustre eyes are as often a result of physical fatigue as of any deficiencies of the soul, and our eyes to-day get quickly tired. But if they are properly treated after a strenuous day one feels rejuvenated in a wonderful manner for the evening. You can learn to treat the eyes yourself, but it is more restful to have it done for you. The process that I know from experience to be especially good is one of Mrs. Adair's specialities. Everyone knows the value of her Ganesh preparations, and the eye treatment is perhaps the most revivifying one amongst the many. Her address in London is 92, New Bond Street, and enquiries will meet with immediate attention and entail no liability.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The main guiding principle of the modern preservation of health may be said to be "to prevent." It is far better to think in good time, "What CAN I do for my health?" than to say one day "What MUST I do for my sickness?" While there is time it behoves you to put your bodily "house in order." Do not make the mistake of waiting until sickness is knocking at the door with all the signs of a complete nervous breakdown.

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MOTORS AND MOTORING

By W. Whittall

WAYS AND COMMUNICATIONS

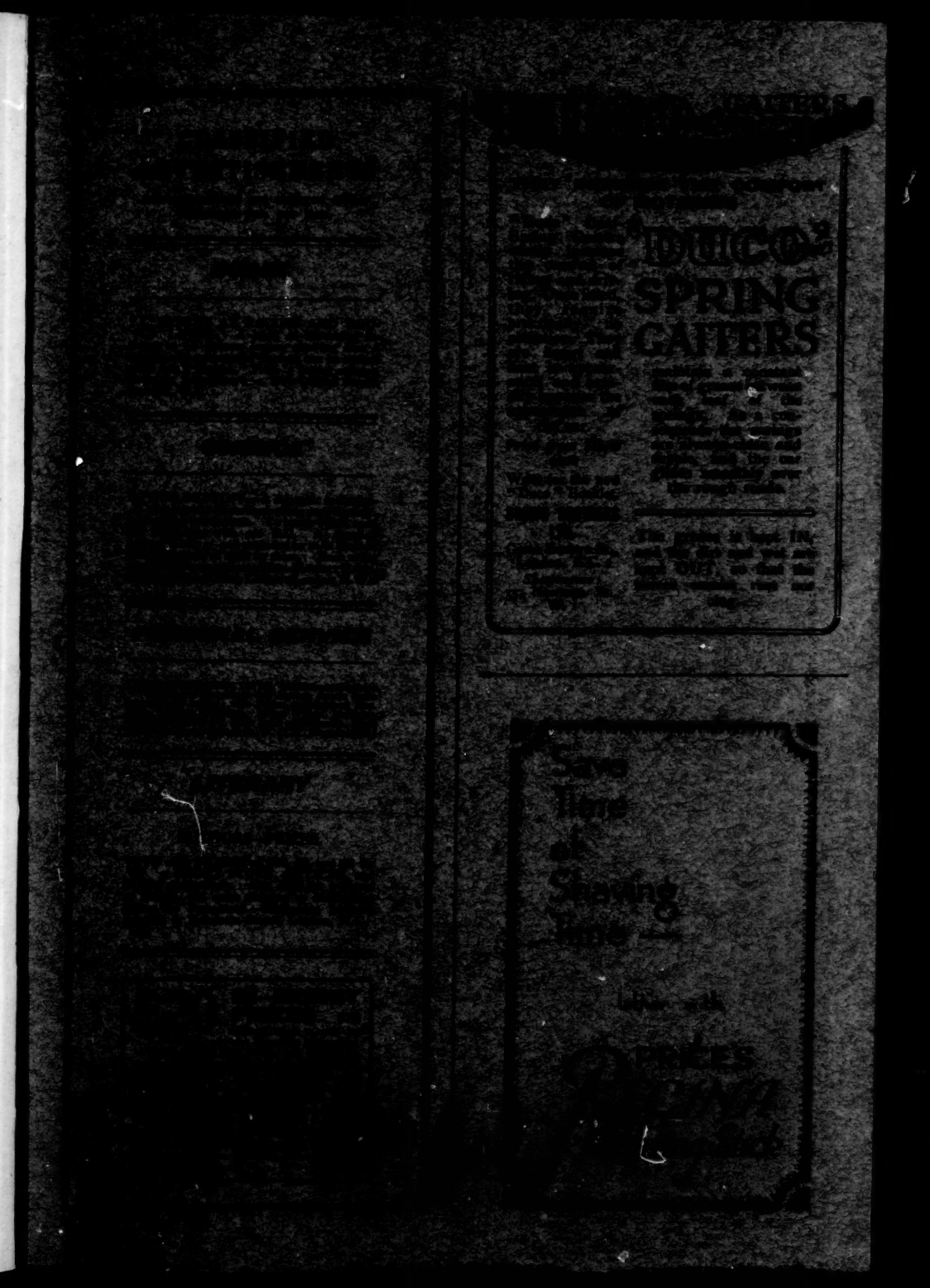
Unless I am very much mistaken, there is going to be a tremendous fight over the Government's proposals for constituting a Ministry of Ways and Communications. In theory, such a Ministry is excellent. In practice, constituted as it would be were the Bill now before Parliament to become law, it would be poisonous. To place the whole of the nation's transport arrangements under a single Ministry, as is proposed, would be likely to give rise to a very questionable economic situation. The experiment of administering roads and railways by a single authority has been tried in other countries, and the invariable experience has been that it is against public policy. True, that was before the days of real development in road transport; but the lesson is there to be read. Supposing the Bill in question to pass into law, the Minister of Ways and Communications would have before him the task of making the railways pay an adequate return on the national capital invested in them—I am assuming that nationalization would follow as a matter of course. Assessed on pre-war figures, the railway systems of the country represent a capital outlay of some £1,200,000,000. Their net profits, also before the war, were about £50,000,000 per annum, all of which has disappeared in extra working costs. Therefore, the task of making them pay is a stupendous one, and we may be very sure that the roads would be starved in order to achieve the apparently impossible for the railways. It is scarcely conceivable that the Ministry would go out of its way to assist road transport—its most serious competitor—in the carrying trade of the country.

KEEP ON THE ROAD BOARD

Fortunately, the Parliamentary Road Transport Committee is alive to the dangers of the situation, and the Bill is assured a vigorous opposition. As I understand it, this opposition will be based on the fact that we already have in existence a body—the Road Board, the outcome of motoring representations of the necessity for the creation of some such body—which, with extended powers and responsible through its own Minister to Parliament, would be quite adequate to the situation. It would be more acceptable to local highway authorities than the suggested Ministry of Ways and Communications, and would be far better equipped for carrying out the interests of localities and the construction of really satisfactory public roads. But whatever shape such a highways authority may ultimately take, the principle of placing roads and railways under a common administration is ill-conceived and dangerous. It is, therefore, up to the motoring community, as the one most intimately concerned, to fight it tooth and nail.

THE FUTURE OF BENZOL

The National Benzol Association has, I am told, made its own arrangements for distribution to the consumer, and so far as the group of gas and other undertakings forming the Association is concerned, benzol is to be independent of the petroleum interests. That is very good news, but I should be better pleased if the benzol people would get down to business and tell us what we shall have to pay for it. The Treasury, I understand, intends to waive the Excise tax so that benzol will stand in a very favourable position compared with petrol. But while I hear a great deal about the fact that we shall *not* be able to buy it at a shilling per gallon, I can find out nothing about what it actually will cost. Again, it is rubbed into me that the coal which was procurable for eight shillings per ton before the war now costs twenty-two shillings, while cost of labour has gone up correspondingly. The benzolites, however, say nothing at all about the increased facilities and improved methods of production which surely must have done something to balance the greater cost of labour and materia!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